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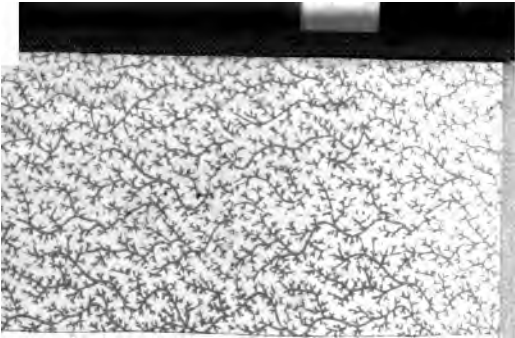
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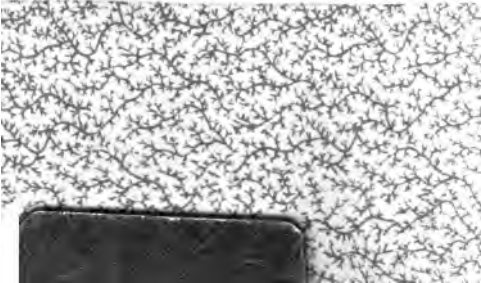
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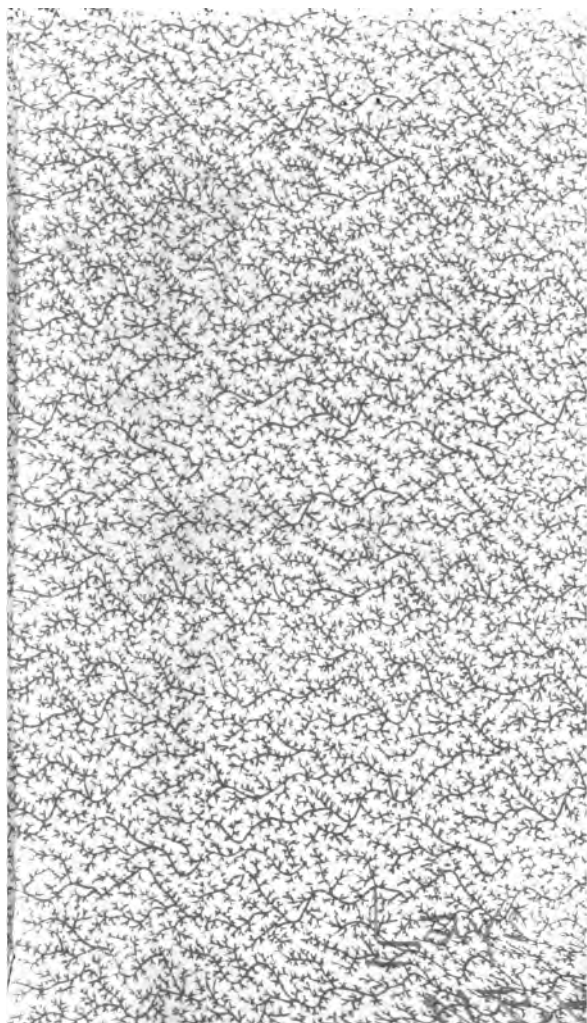


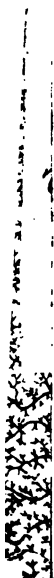
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PLAYS OF LEISURE.

**THE
ITALIAN HUSBAND,**

A DRAMATIC POEM.

The Young Dreamer,

AND

FUGITIVE OFFERINGS IN VERSE.

*"Ne che posso vi dia, da impuier forte;
"Che quante, vi posso dar, tutto vi dono."*

Orlando Furioso.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY JESPER HARDING.

1825



PROLOGUE.

BY A FRIEND.

Earlier days it was the muse's task
To from hated vice its gilded mask ;
To parse broad humour to assail the crowd,
To pierce strokes of satire sting the proud,
To see Folly shrunk, abashed to see
In all her true deformity.

Times are changed, the muse no more may seek
To blush on guilty Pleasure's cheek,
He stands, and her rebuke defies,
He lope one crime, a thousand rise.

His aim must now be to impart
Short hours of peace, and wean the heart
From sights and scenes of real woe, to dwell
On those that, perhaps, may paint too well
Effects that make this blooming world a hell. }

When she opens not the classic page
To try—the Roman's iron age,
To our young bard—'tis a sad tale
Of an proud, yet erring—fair, yet frail ;
Of a hard man, who even while he kills,
Would die himself to spare the blood he spills ;
Of one, that found a bower all gay and bright,
To tinge on it his never-changing blight ;
Of one, that with his desolating power,
Saw the hopes of many a happy hour ;
Of one, deep-dwelling, passionate, that gave
A lasting boon—an early grave ;

Revenge, whose hopelessness ne'er knew,
Lived in the pangs of him he slew ;
Who could dare to smile, and madly trace

Prologue.

The dark despair that gathered o'er the face
Of him who wronged him, as the icy chill
Of death crept o'er his heart ere all was still.

Here in the west where freedom found a home,
When forced from Europe's troubled shores to roam,
Where nature in primeval beauty lies;
Forlorn, deserted Genius ever flies;
In virtue's cause the canvass learns to shine,
And truth seems fairer in the poet's line.
Then let the muse, the mistress of the mind,
Around our hearts her brilliant rosechains bind ;
And though our fathers from their bondage broke,
Yet we may bend to such a gentle yoke.
A bard, unaided by a mighty name,
Dares boldly come to win the prize of fame,
Then give at least a few unfading bays,
Nor 'damn' a native poet 'with faint praise.'

THE ITALIAN HUSBAND.

“Ove son iti
iei casti e veri amplessi suoi, quei dolci
mplici detti? e quelli, a mille a mille
gni d'amor non dubii?

Or che mi giova
gloria, and' Io vo carico? a che gli allori
a tante rische, e memorande angoscie
il sudor compri, s' Io per esse ho data
u sommo bene, del mio cor la pace.”

ALFIERI AGGAMEMNONE.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUKE AZO.

GONSALVO.

GHERALDI.

LUDOVICO.

COSTANZO.

ENRICO.

ANSELMO.

UGO.

LOUIS.

ROMILDA.

GAETANO.

SENATORS, CONSPIRATORS, GUARDS AND ATTENDANTS.



THE
Italian Husband.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A room in Gheraldi's House. (Enter Gheraldi, reading.)

Gheral. "The soldiery is won, and only wait
A leader to their purpose. Thus revenge
And great ambition triumph. More to say
Were perilous, your wisdom will suggest
A bright result—*Inselmo.*"

My hand already grasps the diadem,
And my brow swells within its magic wreath;
Who would not be a monarch? Even the thought
Can bid these shrivelled veins be full again,
And nerve this aged arm once more to deeds
That common valour shrinks from—they would have
A leader! Is Gheraldi then forgot;
Why be it so—until proud Este bows
Before that name ennobled by a crown,
And sues unto her monarch. They shall have
A leader to their hearts, and that full soon;
Yea, to thy heart Lord Azo. Ho! (*Enter Ugo.*)

Ugo. My Lord,
Thy errand is performed; Costanzo heard
From me, the story of his wrongs.

Gheral. Aye! well,
How brooked he the recital? will he yield
An ear to my dispatches? Said you aught
Of vengeance and rebellion?

Ugo. That from thee,
I deemed would bear more weight. He only knows
Romilda is with Azo. The extent
Of all his injury, I did not speak.

Gheral. What, feared you sir?

Ugo. The lightning of his eye,
Even when I said "his wife," the flame burst forth,
And one convulsive throe spoke danger in him.

Gheral. By heaven! our bark rides on a prosperous sea,
And fortune fans her pennons; I will haste
To see the Duke and lure him to his ruin.
The stake we play for is a mighty one;
And so must be the hazard. We shall try
How firmly sits our king upon his throne. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

*A room in the palace of Costanzo, who is discovered with
his children.*

Costanzo. Leave me, my children. I have heard of men
Who would not stop at murder for this cause,
Which is the cause of honour, yet my soul
Shrinks from that last irrevocable act,
And starts at regicide. The deed hath been
A dark and damning—yet I am not quite
The thing I loath to think on. Should it be—
Oh! that the thought would blast them; to exchange
A thousand years of spotless heraldry,
Of fame, so many ages, to become
The scorn of slaves, the mark for every knave,
Dishonoured as myself, to scrawl his jest
Of—faugh—and my unconscious little ones,
Must ye too suffer? must ye be the last
Of our once noble race, and yet the first
To bear the scorn of hissing multitudes,
A nation's jeers, and—if there be revenge
On earth I'll not endure it!

Children. Father, say,
Where is our mother?

Costanzo. Oh! ye have no mother.
My wife should be your mother, and my wife

Is nought. Oh! torture, am I then betrayed
 To misery so deep—arise, ye fiends!
 I do not bid ye curse the wanton, nor,
 No, nor her paramour; I do not ask
 That you should fix your torturing fangs on them,
 And sting them into madness, they have me!
 No, on this head be all your power enforced!
 Drive furies from my breast, each thought of mercy!
 Murder and rapine fill this swelling heart,
 Remorseless, that I may perform such deeds
 As Heaven would weep to look on! Traiterous harlot!
 Here, on this breast that beat so fondly for her,
 That cherished every look so jealously
 'Twas pain that aught should gaze upon those charms,
 Save these fond dotting eyes, and yet so proud,
 So confident in her—upon this breast
 To brand, oh, misery! forevermore,
 The mark, the torturing stamp of Infamy!

Children. Father!

Costanzo. Alas, ye little innocents,
 Ye have no father more, the deed is doing,
 Which makes ye alien to my blood, your names
 A blot among our nobles; yet ye are
 My children, and I—I will try to love ye—
 Spite of the demon here that calls ye—hold—
 Cursed be the tongue that utters it, forever.
 Ye are my offspring, pledges of my love,
 Blood of Costanzo's blood, and born like him
 To shame, a heritage of infamy. (*Enter Gheraldi.*)

Gheral. Costanzo.

Costan. Tell me is my—speak—at once,
 No faltering, speak—my wife—my wife—my wife.

Gheral. The king—

Costan. My wife—

Gheral. Is in Duke Azo's palace!

Costan. Duke Azo's palace—why?—what does she
 there?

But wherefore do I ask; ere now the crowd
 Of idle striplings, and unmannered slaves,
 That throng the corners of our streets, to con

Their tales of scandal o'er, their busy mischief,
 Have buzzed the nauseous secret—you are come *then*,
 Sent by the Duke—Duke Azo to his pandar,
 To offer terms, the recompense of shame,
 The composition for a wife's dishonour?
 Well sir, what says your master? speak!

Gheral.

I blame not

Thine anger, he who has been wronged as thou hast,
 May, to excuse his passion, plead his wrong.
 Indeed, my lord, I pity thee!

Costanzo.

The time

Has been, Gheraldi, when for such a word,
 (And thou dost know it well, nor wouldst have dared
 To use it thus)—I had—no matter—now
 'Tis well that thou dost pity me, for men,
 Men will but scorn me; yet there is a way,
 And I will find it ere my memory lose
 One thought of my dishonour, to efface
 With blood, the stain that he has cast on me.
 I do remember, on a summer's eve,
 When I had saved at peril of my own—
 The life of Azo.—Mark, this same Duke Azo—
 From the devouring jaws, that threatened death,
 Of a ferocious boar; he folded me
 Close to his breast, and thanked me. “Thou hast
 saved,”

He said, “thy sovereign's life; the time may come
 When thou shalt need a recompense—demand it:
 Or let me but anticipate thy wish;
 If I deny thee, may that dagger's point,
 That, driven by thy resolute hand, has saved
 My life, take back the gift.” He may have cause
 To think, ere I have done with him, of this.
 It was an honest wish, and I may live
 E'en to the letter to fulfil it. Come,
 Time presses, and my injured honour calls
 Revenge, revenge. Oh, what a word is that
 To heal the deepest wounds. Now, by yon Heaven
 But thou art one—his parasite, his slave;
 Why speak to thee of vengeance? Fly, disclose,

Like a most faithful servant, to thy prince,
Who will reward, as he has mine, thy service,
The settled hate I bear him.

Gheral. Nay, you wrong me;
I have a sense as keen, my Lord, as thine,
Of what from man to man is due, nor own I
Aught that can bind me to a master's crimes.
I will not say I love Duke Azo less
Than thee, but I do love his honour more,
More than his life, nor own I the distinction
Which subtle knaves, to screen themselves, have drawn
Between the man who steals his neighbour's purse,
Which he nor wants, nor heeds, and him who steals
(That which can never be restored again,)
The husband's spotless honour; 'tis a web
Of so nice texture, that but breathe upon it
Suspicion only not the real stain,
It cannot find again its pristine whiteness.

Costanzo. Furies and hell! I know it, why remind me
That I have lost the jewel of my soul,
And ne'er must hope—'tis false—the tyrant's blood
Will make all clean again. Oh! thou shalt see
How deep an injured husband's curse can strike.

Gheral. You would not murder him?

Costanzo. Aye, that's the word!
Not murder him? Why, I would have his heart!
I would but say, my wife! and that should drown
His coward cry for mercy. I would tear,
Rip up each artery, bare every vein,
And show the world the inside of a king.
Not murder him!—no! I will sacrifice him
Upon the violated shrine of truth.

Gheral. Hold yet.

Costan. Who steps between me and my vengeance?

Gheral. He who would aid thy vengeance—he whose
wrongs
Have fitted him for murder, he whose woes,
Caused by the tyrant's unrelenting hand,
Have placed him at thy side, a fit companion
In all that's bloody: he that having lost

His son, the only solace of his days,
Relies upon himself alone for vengeance,
Who loses nought in losing but himself,
And hath nought else to lose.

Costan. Aye! I remember;
I had forgotten—many years are past
Thy son was slain by order of the Duke,
For some high crime.

Gheral. But did I love him less?

Costan. Why then thy soul is all athirst like mine
And pants for blood—thine eyes like mine could wa
His dying agonies—thy ears drink in
His groans with ecstasy—thy feet could spurn
And mock him in his torment—could'st do this.

Gheral. Yea, on my soul.

Costan. Then on my soul, Gheraldi,
Thou art a fiend, more welcome to my arms
Than were an arch-angelic form of heaven!
Let me embrace thee: are we not a pair
Of precious traitors?

Gheral. Traitors—how my Lord?
'Tis treason when we owe allegiance,
To plot against a king whose confidence
Relies upon our faith: but do we owe,
Or you, or I, allegiance to this Duke?

Costan. I would not have it otherwise; the world
Shall say hereafter when it hears of this
Which we will do, (and it will make a sound
To reach posterity's remotest ears)
That we were men not callous to all crime,
But wrought by wrongs which patience could not bro
Beyond endurance—it shall be a lesson
For kings to learn, the vilest worm will turn
If trodden on too roughly—we will break
The spell, Gheraldi, which enshrouds the name
Of kings—they think, forsooth, they honour us
By—but the time is apt, I'll do it now
Even in the bed of prostitution!

Gheral. You will but mar your fortune!

Costan. Fortune! fortune!
 Mine is a surer aim!
Gheral. (*giving Anselmo's letter*) Read there a better!
Costan. (*reads*) Ere now these men have marched
 to victory
 Beneath Costanzo's guidance—
Gheral. And again,
 Beneath thy banner they shall conquer yet.
Costan. No, never! fame and honour were the spells
 That mail'd Costanzo—
Gheral. Oh I had forgotten!
 The monkish virtues of a peaceful year
 Have stamp'd revenge a crime—we should forgive
 Our enemies—we hear that from our mothers!
Costan. Hear what?
Gheral. Forbearance, fifty years are pass'd
 Since I have heard the precept—treasure it
 Costanzo—I'm too old to learn it now!
 But hear the errand I was sent to tell.
 The Duke hath wronged, and still doth tremble at thee.
 "Go" he commanded me, "and bid Costanzo
 Into my presence, I have rank for him,
 And work that he delights in."
Costan. Ravisher,
 And did he think!
Gheral. Nay, hear me—"thou," he said,
 "Must aid me to subdue the lofty spirit
 Which well I know he bears, and will break forth
 When he shall hear how I have injured him.
 Be thine the task to reconcile him—say
 How many have been glad to mend their fortunes
 By their wife's beauty, and their prince's favour.
 What more thy wisdom shall suggest, advise,
 Be thou my friend," this said he, wrung my hand,
 And so we parted.
Costan. Shall I strangle him!
Gheral. Nay, it were madness to approach him yet,
 With any hostile purpose; he expects,
 And waits thy fury—Lull his fears to rest,
 Forget thy injury—accept his offer

Whate'er it be—receive thou the command
 He wills—and lead against the tyrant's self
 His armed host of satellites—think'st thou
 They have forgotten, when the Florentine
 Borne with his thrice ten thousand to the death
 By them and thee was conquer'd? hath the Duke,
 A charm like that to warm them? hath the Duke,
 A word like that to herald them to glory?
 An arm like thine to lead to victory?
 Be ruled by me and thou shalt yet receive
 A great revenge—

Costan. We will attend his bidding.
 I will not spring on him, and yet, Gheraldi,
 These hands have done less grateful execution.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

A Hall in the Duke's palace.—The Duke and Romilda:

Duke. I shall become an infidel for thee
 Thou beauteous tempter; when I gaze upon
 Those heavenly orbs, where wanton Cupids sport,
 And laughing loves run frolic, I abjure
 My former faith, become a very heathen,
 And worship a plurality of Gods.

Romilda My Lord! when I deserted (which forgive,
 Merciful Heaven) the paths of innocence,
 And forfeited the name of wife, I thought
 Thus to myself; the woman who doth love,
 (As where is she who hath a heart and doth not)
 All cold formality, all prudent fears
 Should lay aside, and even hold her honour
 Dependant on the will of him she loves!

Duke. Now whither does this tend, Romilda?

Romil.

Oh!

I know I am become the veriest slave
 That waits your pleasure; yet, my lord, remember
 What I have done to place me so beneath
 The lowest of your servants, is a cause
 Why you should love and cherish me the more.

Duke. Nay, all shall love, all honour thee, thou art

The mistress of my soul, and who shall dare
Deny thee homage?

Romil. Therefore see, my lord,
That thou, when sated passion yields her empire,
Cast me not off, the scorn of thy dependants:
For let thy favour leave me, and the world
Will soon forget the cause, and but remember
How guilty I have been—I shall deserve
From all, save thee, contempt.

Duke. I swear by Heaven!

Romil. Nay, swear not, only say that thou wilt love,
Love, as thou didst but yesterday, Romilda,
And I will ask no other happiness:
The world may scorn, so thou but look on me
With eyes of pity.

Duke. By my crown I promise,
And by thy dearer love, that thou shalt reign
Sole empress of my bosom I am not,
I trust, a man in nature's common mould,
So formed of each fop's holiday materials,
Whose soul, incapable of love, but knows
The gratifying of a sensual wish,
Nor feels the true enjoyment, where the heart
Clasps the true object of its adoration—
Indifferent to all the world beside;
No! where I love, I love but once, and there
I love forever.

Romil. Would you have me deem
Myself that envied one, oh give me then,
My lord, one promise more—

Duke. What canst thou wish
That I will not accord thee—ask me for
My life, my throne, and I will give them to thee.

Romil. I will not put thee to so hard a trial;
But I conjure thee by thy promised love,
When he (whom more I dare not call my husband)
Shall call thee to account, (for well I know
His generous spirit will disdain the wrong,
Which we—alas! that I might say which *you*,
Have done him) should he chance but to forget

That reverence which thy great state demands,
And his allegiance owes to princely rank,
Thou wilt remember, deep has been the stab
That thou hast made within his manly breast,
And may call forth some anger—bear with him
But for my sake, who once was proud to call
(And happy then) myself Costanzo's wife.
Say, wilt thou promise me?

Duke.

You do me wrong

Romilda, in the entreaty; my own heart
Had taught me so much sufferance.

Romil.

Then I'm happy!

For I did dread some dark catastrophe
To this so black beginning—but my hopes
Look forward to a brighter summer now,
And but for one thing—

Duke.

If my sceptre's power

Can purchase it—

Romil.

It is beyond thy power.

What should a mother want my lord; her children—
And would a father yield them?

Duke.

Yes, to thee!

Or I will wrest them—

Romil.

Nay, no violence!

Add not another crime—the catalogue
Is great enough already—we have need
Of all good men's good wishes; do not call
A father's curse, a husband's is too heavy,
On this devoted, and too guilty head.
Beware, my lord, of murder.

Duke.

How—of murder!

Romil. If thou dost lift thy hand, to force from him
His children, thou wilt wake Costanzo's wrath,
And murder, like an ugly fiend, will follow
With giant steps where passion leads the way.

Duke.

Thy will in all shall conquer—if for thee
I would endure the wrath of such a man
As I do know Costanzo—if for thee,
Front faction and its demagogues, in all
Their most terrific aspects, shall I not,

For thee, extend the olive branch of love
And friendship to Costanzo. Would to heaven
Thou hadst not been his wife. (*Enter a servant.*)

Servant. My Lord. (*Whispers the Duke.*)

Duke. Romilda! most important matter

Demands my presence; think of me, my love,
Till I return, and may the halcyon smile
Of peace, be on, and with thee—fare thee well. (*Exit.*)

Romil. Farewell, and peace be with me—oh my Azo,
Thou only art my peace: the woman who
Hath fallen, lives only in the heart of him
Who hath undone her—in his arms alone
She may be happy, or at least forget
Awhile remorse; but leave me not to think!
Thought—thought is horror—peace remain with me!
Nay, never think that peace can enter there,
When innocence has ceased to be an inmate.
Ye bright days of my childhood where are ye!
Where are ye fled ye hours of happiness;
When anxious love grew happy at my smile,
And virtue owned the conquest! out alas.
Conscience, thou must not drive me there, lest I
See what would make me mad; now stead of love,
Of honourable love, consuming lust
Will sue; nay, will not sue, but rudely snatch
Those favours which I dare not to deny,
Nor yet dare die according. (*Exit Romilda, and the curtain drops.*)

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Before the Duke's Palace. Enter Gheraldi.

Gheral. Mischief's afoot, and vengeance leads the way;
Look from thy hollow sepulchre, and see,
My son, thy father brings the promised victim: .
Strike now Costanzo, but so deep as I

Will give thee means, and thou shalt have no cause
 To weep the triumph of thine enemy.
 I will not trust thee tho', thy crying wrongs
 May urge too hastily the blow; my age,
 Tempered by long and sad experience,
 Joined to thy brave impetuosity,
 Will rule it wisely; opportunity
 The mother is of action—hah, he comes.

(Enter Costanzo.)

Costan. Whether 'twere best to spring upon his throat,
 And strangle him, and so complete at once,
 By a brave blow, the work: yet then she lives
 To sting me to remembrance; she must die.
 Yes, by my children's sacred blood, I swear,
 The sole remaining relic of our house,
 Not spotted by dishonour.

Gheral. Hold, rash man!
 Is this thy covenanted faith to me?

What—wouldst thou hunt the tiger in his den?

Costan. Aye! Lucifer, (for vengeance) in his halls
 Of sulphurous fire.

Gheral. Thou wilt not—be advised?

Costan. Not from my steadfast purpose, I would have
 Revenge, and such revenge as never yet
 The earth has dared to whisper to the stars:
 Not blood, but carnage, slaughter—and not death,
 His heart—

Gheral. And think'st thou in his halls of pride,
 Surrounded by his satellites, the host
 Of leeches that but live upon his life,
 Feed on his bounty, and exist alone
 On his existence, (such are all the friends
 That princes have) the way will be secure
 To Azo's heart?

Costan. What care I if they hew me
 To pieces with their swords? he's lived enough,
 Aye, and too long, who hath survived his honour.
 Could I die better, than in mortal fight
 Closed with mine enemy—away—the thought
 Hath roused my tardy spirit—off, I say;

By heaven you shall not thwart me.

Gheral.

Madman—fool.

Costan. Madman! Gheraldi, what hath made me mad,
That which had made another curse the hour
That gave him birth to infamy like mine.
I would curse too, but man's availeth not
To blast eternally; then wherefore curse.
Yes, I am mad, and it is well, else I
Should shut the gates of mercy on myself,
Doing what I shall do—yes, I am mad
To bear the wound that festers at my heart,
Possessing what would cure it. See, Gheraldi,
This little instrument has all the skill,

(*Showing a dagger.*)

Which Esculapius had; it is a cure
Infallible for every ill: this breast
May feel its power full soon.

Gheral.

And let him live,

The Duke that hath betrayed your happiness,
And robbed you of your honour?

Costan.

Let him live!

Aye! send him where his life shall last forever!
Follow, and see how I will crush this tyrant,
Despite the godlike majesty of kings,
That awes rebellion. Follow, I will prove
This high prerogative, and if it stand
My dagger's point—why, then 'tis true: come, follow.

Gheral. To thee, Costanzo, have I yielded up
The noble blow which should be mine alone,
Because I honoured, loved, and pitied thee.
My wrong, too, might be satisfied with blood,
Howevershed, so it were Azo's; thine
Demands it from thy hands, I acquiesce.
But by the cherished hope of my revenge,
Rather than lose it, thus within my grasp,
By thy ungoverned passion, I will fly,
Inform the Duke of thy designs; leave thee
To perish basely, and fulfil myself
The noble purpose of my soul hereafter.

Costan. Thou dar'st as well convey the trembling fox

Will give thee means, and thou shalt have no cause
 To weep the triumph of thine enemy.
 I will not trust thee tho', thy crying wrongs
 May urge too hastily the blow; my age,
 Tempered by long and sad experience,
 Joined to thy brave impetuosity,
 Will rule it wisely; opportunity
 The mother is of action—hah, he comes.

(Enter Costanzo.)

Costan. Whether 'twere best to spring upon his throat,
 And strangle him, and so complete at once,
 By a brave blow, the work: yet then she lives
 To sting me to remembrance; she must die.
 Yes, by my children's sacred blood, I swear,
 The sole remaining relic of our house,
 Not spotted by dishonour.

Gheral. Hold, rash man!
 Is this thy covenanted faith to me?
 What—wouldst thou hunt the tiger in his den?

Costan. Aye! Lucifer, (for vengeance) in his halls
 Of sulphurous fire.

Gheral. Thou wilt not—be advised?

Costan. Not from my steadfast purpose, I would have
 Revenge, and such revenge as never yet
 The earth has dared to whisper to the stars:
 Not blood, but carnage, slaughter—and not death,
 His heart—

Gheral. And think'st thou in his halls of pride,
 Surrounded by his satellites, the host
 Of leeches that but live upon his life,
 Feed on his bounty, and exist alone
 On his existence, (such are all the friends
 That princes have) the way will be secure
 To Azo's heart?

Costan. What care I if they hew me
 To pieces with their swords? he's lived enough,
 Aye, and too long, who hath survived his honour.
 Could I die better, than in mortal fight
 Closed with mine enemy—away—the thought
 Hath roused my tardy spirit—off, I say;

By heaven you shall not thwart me.

Gheral.

Madman—fool.

Costan. Madman! Gheraldi, what hath made me mad?
That which had made another curse the hour
That gave him birth to infamy like mine.
I would curse too, but man's availeth not
To blast eternally; then wherefore curse.
Yes, I am mad, and it is well, else I
Should shut the gates of mercy on myself,
Doing what I shall do—yes, I am mad
To bear the wound that festers at my heart,
Possessing what would cure it. See, Gheraldi,
This little instrument has all the skill,

(*Showing a dagger.*)

Which Esculapius had; it is a cure
Infallible for every ill: this breast
May feel its power full soon.

Gheral.

And let him live,

The Duke that hath betrayed your happiness,
And robbed you of your honour?

Costan.

Let him live!

Aye! send him where his life shall last forever!
Follow, and see how I will crush this tyrant,
Despite the godlike majesty of kings,
That awes rebellion. Follow, I will prove
This high prerogative, and if it stand
My dagger's point—why, then 'tis true: come, follow.

Gheral. To thee, Costanzo, have I yielded up
The noble blow which should be mine alone,
Because I honoured, loved, and pitied thee.
My wrong, too, might be satisfied with blood,
However shed, so it were Azo's; thine
Demands it from thy hands, I acquiesce.
But by the cherished hope of my revenge,
Rather than lose it, thus within my grasp,
By thy ungoverned passion, I will fly,
Inform the Duke of thy designs; leave thee
To perish basely, and fulfil myself
The noble purpose of my soul hereafter.

Costan. Thou dar'st as well convey the trembling fox

Into the Lion's den, thyself to feed
The hungry monster: thou would'st be as safe.
Thou dar'st not.

Gheral. Sir, you know not what I dare;
I dare do any thing but tamely lose
A great revenge.

Costan. Nay, bear with me, Gheraldi!
I will be ruled by thee, so I but reap
The bloody harvest of my hopes.

Gheral. I swear
You shall have glorious opportunity
Hereafter for the deed.

Costan. Enough—now come:
Oh, you shall wonder: I will flatter him,
Screw every nerve to play the hypocrite,
And feign a most abandoned humbleness—
In all things I will be a monument
Of great forbearance: I will teach my eye
To be an abject sycophant, my tongue
To lie —

Gheral. And canst thou hope to govern then,
In presence of the Duke, that passion which
Bursts from thy lips e'en now.

Costan. See, I am calm—
Thus will I go before the Duke, and thus
With high unfaltering step approach the throne,
The fountain of dishonour. I will learn
To hear him speak, ere look on him, and that, too,
When custom shall permit me, he shall see
I know my duty better than deny him
My house's freedom—I will cheat him nobly. (*Exeunt.*)

Scene changes to the Council Hall; the Duke and Senators discovered.

Duke. My Lords! I would not at a time like this
Be wanting to your uses; ye have heard
How that for some, to me unknown event,
My people have, against the awful rights
Of kings, revolted from me. I have sought
Through all my realm some hero skilled in arms,
To oppose the factious rebels, and have found

None worthier than Costanzo: all confess
His prowess, and his battles bear him witness,
Of skill and valour fitted for the task.

(Enter Gheraldi.)

Gheral. My Lord!

Duke. Gheraldi, hath Costanzo heard
Our pleasure?

Gheral. He attends!

Duke. Then bid him enter.

(Enter Costanzo.)

Gheral. Now arm him patience with thy triple shield,
Lest he destroy himself, and me—he comes.

Duke. Costanzo!

Costan. Well, I hear thee—now I'll do it!

Gheral. What wouldst thou do?

Costan. Nay, nothing—I am here;
What is your sovereign pleasure?

Duke. Good Costanzo!

The heavens determined we should know how vast
Was the necessity of having thee,
The guardian of our crown, have sent new wars;
In which extremity we call on thee,
As heretofore, to stand our champion: say,
The choice is freely thine, wilt thou accept
The office?

Costan. Oh, my prince, what have I done
To claim this mighty honour—fight for thee!
For thee—why I would die for thee, thou knowest,
And count it happiness. But answer me,
My lord, one question: When a man doth swear
By that which hath no being, as, should I
Now offer up unto a heathen God
A solemn vow, or should I pledge an oath
To any labour, by the truth of Judas,
Or any thing that is not, were my oath
Irrevocable, or my conscience bound
To the performance?

Duke. No! for that is false

By which thou didst engage thyself.

Costan.

Then here

Before thy throne I swear, by that which thou
Dost know most dear to me, my house's honour,
To serve thee faithfully. I have him now.

Duke. What need of any oath? I doubt thee not!

Costan. You act unwisely then—doubt every one.
Man is but man, and man was born to sin,
And he will fawn, caress, and slay you after.
Trust none, my Lord, they are unworthy all:
And who relies upon them puts a tooth
Into his jaws who had been fangless else,
To sting him at his pleasure. By my soul,
Had I some valued son, or cherished brother,
As safely would I guard myself from them
As I would shun the slippery adder's path,
When he doth bask him in the noonday sun,
And suck new venom.

Gheral.

Whither does this tend?

Duke. The breast, Costanzo, that is free from guilt,
Is free from all suspicion; I would open
My palace gates at night, and to the world
Aloud proclaim the place of my repose,
Nor need another guard than that I carry
Ever within my bosom. It may be
That I have erred; and what of that: all men
May do so: passion is an evil master.
My heart doth tell me, tho', as should my deeds
Assure whom I thro' weakness may have wronged,
That still I love the injured, and am ready
To do that justice on myself which I—
Demanded, would inflict upon another.
I may have need of pardon, and I bend
For it. I have no cause of fear,
And cannot fear without it!

Costan. But temptation,
Temptation's dangerous, 'twere best not trust
E'en me, more than you can recall the trust;
Altho', my lord, I think you have had proof
Costanzo is most honest.

Duke. When I doubt thee
I shall deserve thine anger.

Costan. Yet, my lord,
For I will speak to thee with openness,
As I would question with my inmost soul,
Holding with it communion—thou shalt see
At least Costanzo is no hidden foe.

Duke. No foe at all I hope!

Costan. Why, thou shalt see,
Whether I am, and whether I have cause,
As this world goes, to be so. Men do say,
But what of that? it is a scandalous world,
And men will say all things: they give the name
Of crime to that which is most virtuous,
And turn us mad, that we may tear each other
While they unharmed look on, and smile to see,
“What fools our brothers are:” yet men do say
That thou, my lord, hast wronged me. I will speak
In that sincerity which I do know
Thou wilt approve, and use the harshest terms
To speak the harshest meaning: Thou hast stolen
My wife and honour—this is what men say.
Thou hast returned for all the benefits
That one so poor as I could offer thee,
A sovereign prince, disgrace, and infamy,
And black ingratitude; hast wound thyself,
Like to the worm that crawls into men’s flesh
Leaving its noxious venom as it goes,
Until at last it doth devour the heart,
And prey upon the vitals: so hast thou
Into the bosom of mine honour crept,
(Most like this noisome serpent,) and plucked thence
Its very essence—this is what men say.
That thou hast made my offspring infamous
To after ages; my posterity
Branded with lasting ignominy; fixed
A blight upon them, wronged them of their name,
(Which else had stood the proudest in your court,
A mark of exultation) fame, and honour,
And all that makes life happy; and on me
Planted the cuckold’s curse—this men do say.
Gheral. Why did I trust this prater!

Duke. Darest thou use
To me audacious—

Costan. Heaven forbid, my lord,
That I should entertain this thought! I know
There was a noble Roman once, was wont,
When that his patron* would amuse an hour
In idle dalliance with his wife, to sleep,
And Cato was not over scrupulous;
Then why should I! my lord, if it can give
Thee pleasure, not alone my wife, but take
My little ones and bare their guiltless breasts
To the assassin's knife, they are your subjects.
What could I do?—but for what *thou* hast done
I scorn to feel displeasure, that being gone
Which thou hast taken, there yet remains for me
Enough beside, then why should I complain?

Duke. I know not even now!

Costan. I see my lord,
Thou dost distrust me—have I not an oath
Recorded in the heavens to serve thee truly?

Duke. And wilt thou?

Costan. Thou shalt see if yet this arm
Has lost its wonted vigour!

Duke. Follow then.
('Tis best at all events to send him hence) (*Aside.*)
And we will see all ceremony done
That may befit thy station to receive,
And ours to give. (*Exeunt Duke and Senators.*)

Costan. He's gone—now thunders strike him!

Gheral. Thou hast done well!

Costan. Why so I think myself;
I did but play a little with his conscience,
To see how it would stand the putting on.

Gheral. And will you then accept of this command?
See you not through the shallow artifice?

Costan. Yes, and despise it—But for thee old man,
Where is thy boasted caution—where are now

* Galba and Mœcenas.

Thy mighty hopes—are all thy plots discovered,
The signs of thy rebellion seen, ere yet
One blow was struck?—

Gheral. And wisely have I taught
The Duke his danger—Think not 'twas without
My wish he was informed—'twas I that told him,
That thou might'st thus be sent to shew the way
To victory and vengeance—(*enter Romilda—they retire.*)

Romilda. Then there is
No way but this, and this is horrible,
Yet it must end but here at last—I cannot,
Nay, must not live dependant on the love
Which is at best but passion, of the Duke;
To be thrown by at pleasure, as men throw
A worn out garment, for the scornful jeers
Of matrons proud in undiscovered sin,
And maids to pass as something loathsome. No—
Hah!

Costan. God of Heaven!

Romil. Oh! my husband, mercy!
I do not ask you not to hate, to scorn me;
For I have fallen e'en below the hope
Of thy compassion—trample on me—spurn me—
But do not murder me—I have a prayer
To breathe for mercy where it is no crime
To pardon—thou canst never.

Costan. Misery!
Let me begone—I must not hear thee more—
Romilda!

Romil. Nay—oh utter not that name;
In hours of happiness when I was free
From guilt, thy lips have softly breathed that sound,
And waked me from my slumbers to such joys
As nought but innocence can ever know;
A horrid recollection hovers o'er it.
E'en now, it thrills my heart; it tells me that
Those happy hours are fled—ah do not say
Romilda, lest that I forget myself,
My crime that has divided me forever
From thy proud heart—too proud to pity mine,

And in an hour of wild forgetfulness
Return thy name Costanzo—

Costan. Oh my wife!

What do I—stay—oh this it was I think—
Curses—how beautiful she looks—how fair—
I'll stab him thro' her heart—look on me well;
May Heaven as I do pardon thee,---thine hour,
Thine utmost hour is past.

Romil. 'Tis just---yet spare me!

Costan. Methinks there are two demons at my ear,
And which to heed I know not but one effort,
And it were done, and I were well revenged.
Hast prayed?

Romil. Thou wilt not kill me!

Costan. Yea, by Heaven!

Romilda, I have searched my soul each way
To find what may extenuate thy crime,
And gave thee back thy life; but there is nought—
Now, as there is a God above us, I
Have sworn that thou shalt die, (*he is about to draw a
dagger from his breast—she in a supplicating manner
catches hold of his arm*) nay do not pull
So at my heart---

Romil. My lord, my loved, my husband!

Costan. Ah---didst thou say thy husband, that is
false---

Thy loved too---no---for thou dost love the Duke,
And I do hate him worse than I hate hell.
Now can I do it---husband---impudent---
Oh shameless---have I not from honour's height
Fallen by thee to shame's most loathed abyss;
And darest thou call me husband, whom the world
Has set its mark of infamy upon?
This to thy heart---

Romil. Oh! not in anger then---

Kill me in pity rather---say farewell,
But with a voice of kindness, I will bare
My bosom to thy dagger, thou shalt strike
Where thou wast wont to pillow thee at night---
So fondly---look on me Costanzo---

Costan.

Hah!

How thou dost make it thrill my maddening brain!
 Costanzo didst thou say—no, say the Duke;
 Say but the Duke, that I may stab thy life—
 And yet not murder thee—

Romil.

My husband—

Costan.

Hah!

That voice hath magic in it which hath charmed
 The lion in my bosom—live Romilda,
 Live to be happier—I will not chide thee;
 I will not say how thou hast broke my heart.
 Farewell! when next we meet it must be there
 Where I again may hope for peace—the earth
 To me is as a barren wilderness.

Romil. And worse to me—shame clings to me for-
 ever.

I see my guilt, my infamy, but know
 Degraded woman even may repent.
 Costanzo, never more will I return
 (Hear Heaven my resolution,) to the bed
 Of shame - from thine an exile, I will be
 Thy chaste, and chastened servant—only say
 Thou dost forgive me— say that I may think
 Sometimes, but in my prayers, of thee—and now
 Farewell, my lord, forever

Costan.

Fare thee well!

Romilda, thou may'st think of me sometimes—
 Tho' we must meet no more; and I will bear
 Thy image in my bosom—now farewell,
 My wife—my wife.

Romil.

Oh didst thou say thy wife!

Now for that one kind word may heaven reward
 Thy generous spirit, and when thou shalt hear
 That I am dead, oh still repeat the word,
 And shed a tear for one that was thy wife.
 Wife— am I yet thy wife?

Costan.

I had a name

That would have better fitted thee but no—
 will not crush thy penitence nor say
 Thou canst not be forgiven—be e'en now
 The daughter of Alzirda—

Romil. And thy wife?
Oh say but so!

Costan. Why, what are these that roll
Like burning tears upon my cheek, and quite
Unman my resolution—leave me.

Romil. Nay,
Do not reject my penitent tears!

Costan. Why! would you
That I should be the tame thing that men call
A willing—rise ye spirits of my fathers
And shield me!

Romil. Shall I once again behold
My children?

Costan. Never that—

Romil. Yet once Costanzo—
But once more to behold their opening beauties,
To lave them with a mother's tears.

Costan. Romilda,
Thou hast o'ercome me: be it as it may—
Say thou wilt quit pollution, that no more
Thou wilt behold the Duke, and thou shalt see
Thy children—have them ever with thee: I
Will pardon—will do all but be thy husband.

Romil. Wilt thou do this?

Costan. Nay, do not hang on me,
Thou art to me the basilisk, and while
I gaze on thee, each moment is a stab
Eternal to my honour—every throb
Of wakening love. Romilda, oh, my wife,
Thou hast undone me, yet I doat on thee
With all the wild extravagance of passion.
Let me embrace my ruin, thou shalt live,
And when the rabble scoff thee, and deride
The mistress of the Duke, my breast shall be
Thy shield; an age of infamy will follow,
Yet I will bear it all, and thou shalt be—
No, that thou canst not; well, then thou shalt be
My shame, since comfort I must know no more:
But may my treasured curses strike his heart
Who has undone us both; amid the joys

And festal pleasures of his court, may he,
 May he alone be joyless.
 If he have offspring, may their guiltless tongues
 Speak daggers to his conscience, and when grown
 May they prove bastard, and rebel against
 The blood that did beget them: then, when all
 The accumulated anguish of despair
 Hath rendered him unfeeling to his woes,
 And callous to his misery, then, aye, then,
 Will I the avenger come.

(Exeunt, and the curtain drops.)

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A hall in the arsenal. Gheraldi solus.

Gheral. How it may change his nature, that demands
 Some thought; when he shall hear, as soon he must,
 For even the populace throughout the city
 Proclaim the mighty wonder. What, the Duke,
 The Duke resign the hard earned prize of years,
 His maiden spoils in Cupid's wanton lists;
 How it may work upon his temper, when
 The news shall reach him that his prudent dame
 Returns to her allegiance. By the mass,
 Had I but thought this possible, the deed
 Ere now had been accomplished; should it change
 Costanzo's resolution, small would be
 My chance of pardon; then there is but this,
 Anticipate. Yet that were feeble good,
 And vengeance will not follow; but, by Heaven
 If he should waver? How, if I accuse
 Romilda? say that with an outside show
 Of virtue, not substantial—and her abode
 Which she hath made with me, for an asylum,
 May colour well the cheat. Yet that is dark.

(Enter Anselmo, Gonsalvo, Gaetano, &c.)

Gheral. Did he, or I,
When all your host in pallid fear had fled,
Bid the retiring Phalanx stand again,
And conquer with Costanzo?

Ansel. What avails
Thy boasted aid, if Ugo be a traitor?

Gheral. Thou pale and faltering coward, in thy throat
May the foul falsehood choke thee?

Ans. (*Enter Enrico*) Who is this?

Enr. 'Tis rumored that young Cosimo arrived
From Pisa, leads his warriors to the rescue;
And Azo rallying 'neath his brothers' banner,
Bids loud defiance to Costanzo's power!

Gheral. Then on my brothers to the citadel,
Each to the post assigned him.

Ludov. (*Entering in haste*) Fly my lords!
The traitor Ugo hath betrayed us all.

Gheral. By heaven! I'll strike the slave that dares to
say it.

Ludov. (*to the conspirators who interpose.*) Why, let
him come—he will but spare the rack,
Even now the Duke approaches.

Gheral (*rushing out*) Ye shall see
If yet Gheraldi can destroy his foe.

Gonsal. I never saw him thus disturbed—the fear
Of death is powerful within him now.

Ans. Oh think not 'tis the fear of death—that Ugo
Be sure has spared his master, know ye not
Gheraldi has a foe beside the Duke.

Conspir. He would not dare betray us.

Ansel. Hath he not
Betrayed his monarch! are ye all prepared
To die? Your enemies are here—come on—
One pledge—no spirit here will bow before
The Duke for pardon.

Conspir. Never! never! never!
(*without.*) *Duke.* Let none presume to enter till he
hears

(Whatever pass) my order. (*enter Duke.*) Hail my
friends!

Why are ye met together thus, in secret,
While the deserted council waits your presence?
Why are ye here in idleness, and know
Your prince would have his counsellors? why here
While treason braves your monarch? what, abashed!
Your duty calls you! to the senate chamber.

Ans. And are ye then like cattle to the slaughter
Led by your shepherd's whistle—fie, my lord,
To stoop to falsehood is a slave's resort.
Who is a prince, and lies, degrades his title;
Now hear the voice of one who would have been
A monarch and a great one; fit to reign
And vindicate his right, without the last
Mean subterfuge of cowardice—a lie.
Hear me, Lord Azo? In thy throat thou art
A liar and a coward! and as such
Too mean for me—I give thee to my dogs!
Nay, move not for your guards, a thousand swords
Shall do their office, ere a man can cross
This threshold to thy rescue.

Duke. Know ye not
There is a charm to guard the blood of kings?
Behold me, traitors! is not this the voice
So oft has made ye tremble? is not this
The eye whose light'ning hath appall'd you? Come
Essay this arm, ye have not felt that yet!
Why pause ye? are ye then my subjects still?
The power of princes is not in their arm,
When subjects bend for mercy; mine is here,
Live, to be loyal.

Ans. Slaves! we know thee, prince,
'Tis not Costanzo only hath a wife!
But I—and he—and each of us is blessed,
Perhaps, with a Romilda.

Duke. Insolent!

Ans. Now speaks again the tyrant; this for me!
(attacks the Duke, but is struck down.)
See how your king forgives you. (dies.)
(Conspirators about rushing on the Duke, Costanzo heard
without.)

Costan. Not to pass!
 By heaven I'll find a passage thro' his heart
 That dares to bar my way. (*enters*) How, traitors! hold!
 Costanzo claims his vengeance. Back, ye slaves!
 Is there no humbler game for such as ye?
 Go batten on yon vulgar herd, the blood
 Of Azo is my tribute.

Duke. Better fall
 By such as these. I had no oath from them
 Of fealty; nor heeded if I had it;
 But thou; how manhood shrinks before thee, thou,
 A soldier and a senator, before
 The assembled world, hast stained thy soul with false-
 hood,
 And 'fled thy name with perjury; then better
 To die by those who, having nought to lose,
 Are but *unhonour'd*, than, rebellious slave,
 By one like thee, *dishonour'd*.

Costan. I would look
 To see what spell is on thee, that my arm
 Till now hath, palsied, trembled on my sword.
 An oath—to thee—an oath—oh, doting fool!
 Pledged I an oath to thee of fealty?
 Yea, on my *house's honour*. Hadst thou not,
 Live I to say it, robbed it of that honour,
 And left my children nameless? then it was,
 On the unfounded base that thou hast shaken,
 I swore to serve thee—on this sword I swore!
 False was the pledge I gave thee, and this steel
 Hath yet no foes but who are friends to thee;
 Then be this breast a passage to thy throne,
 Or thou may'st find it wielded firmly yet
 By one well fit to hold the brand of justice.

Conspir. (*rushing forward.*) Down with the tyrant;
 strike him to the earth!

Costan. Who strikes, save me, against his sovereign's
 life;

I brand a traitor. and I hold a foe. (*They fight.*)

Duke. Against thy king—ho, there! within—my
 guards!

(*Enter Gheraldi and guards.*) Seize yon discovered traitor!

Costanzo. How, Gheraldi?

Duke. Gheraldi, yes, he only faithful found,
Where all were traitors else; (*to guards*) away with him. (*Gheraldi looks significantly at Costanzo.*)
For these, I would have spared them, but too late
They would accept my mercy.

Louis. Rather say,
That to the last they do despise thy power,
And spit upon thee for thy proffered mercy.

Costan. Aye, right—the spirit of revenge is yet
Unquell'd, tho' thus in bondage. If thou hast
An arm, save for thy purposes of theft,
Thou tyrant meet me.

Duke. (*to guards*) Bear him hence—away;
Heap fetters on him.

Costan. Still am I unbound. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

SCENE II.

A room in Gheraldi's house. Gheraldi, solus.

Gheral. All evil works together for my good;
And the imperial diadem, that seemed
Snatched from my grasp this morn, unfolds again
Its glittering circle to my eager gaze,
Undazzled by its glories. One hath fallen—
So perish all: and the detested corse
Of my young coadjutor headless lies
A shapeless mass of what was once Anselmo.
This makes for my ambition—my revenge
Unsated still, demands its royal victim.
To give Costanzo back his life, forsooth,
Because the traitor stood before the blow
Aimed at his prince. To give him back his life
So forfeit by the law, and banish him!
Hath the Duke tired of life?—to suffer him
An instant near his person—yet he gives
Fit time to the prescribed, to bear away
His all of precious! What at a mighty debt

Is gratitude—the Duke may pay his life for't:
 For if I know my instrument, Costanzo
 Hath yet a day in Este, and with him
 A day sufficeth for an age of vengeance.
 But see, my hero comes, revolving still
 The chances of the morning; it were well
 To know his mood ere tamper with his humour.
(Retires to the back of the stage. Enter Costanzo, not perceiving Gheraldi.)

Costan. Now Heaven would justify the deed, and man
 Would say it were well done—why then I'll do it.
 That parting kiss hath been the kiss of shame,
 Of guilt, and madness follows: boys will point
 At the tame cuckold—let them, I can bear it.

Gheral. Costanzo.

Costan. Hah, Gheraldi, I am come
 To do the deed you know of.

Gheral. I, my lord,
 Indeed I thought that you were rather come
 A welcome husband to a virtuous wife!

Costan. What mockery is this? where is my wife?
 My wife, no, no—I did not say my wife.
 Where is Romilda?

Gheral. All the world, Costanzo,
 Doth envy thee thy wife.

Costan. I have no wife;
 Why would you make me curse the name; yet say,
 The mother of my children?

Gheral. Oh, my lord,
 When you shall hear so many tongues proclaim
 The penitence, the virtue of thy wife,
 Thou wilt not cast her from thee—she hath erred,
 But what of that?

Costan. Infernal fiends—what of it!

Gheral. And he—what wouldst thou do?

Costan. Oh, that I had him,
 Accursed spoiler, in the battle field,
 Surrounded by his satellites, and I
 But this free arm—no more.

Gheral. But for thy wife—

Thou wilt not curse her, too? Men say, my lord,
And women too, that she is penitent,
Who are not most forgiving; she has left
The Duke and like——

Costan. God bless and pardon her,
As I do—for this last——

Gheral. Indeed, Costanzo,
Thou hast confided in me: would'st thou rather
That I should see thee happy! but 'tis vain
To urge that question.

Costan. I would rather be,
Gheraldi, of all things the veriest wretch
That crawls upon creation, than enjoy
A life of unmixed happiness, if man
In that could trace the shadow of dishonour.

Gheral. Indeed, I'm glad of it, I could not bear
Thy unsuspecting nature should be wrought,
Howe'er unconsciously, to such a fall.
'Tis said that thou shalt take thy wife again
(If she desert Duke Azo) to thy bosom.
Thy father, did he live, would rather see thee
Hugging the venom'd scorpion to thy heart,
That were not shame to thee.

Costan. Nor is it shame
To pardon penitence: I do forgive,
But ere I take her back, I must forget,
And ere forget——

Gheral. It was an idle tale, then;
And yet the world hath said——

Costan. The world hath lied!
The world is false, hath been, and will be false—
But I am fixed—I take her to these arms—
I take that form that hath in wantonness
Of lust been pressed by Azo! I receive
The foul corruption of a harlot bed!
I bear pollution to the bed of love!

By heaven I'd rather breathe the poisoned air
Of the sirocco, taint my pure blood's current
With something worse than pestilence, inhale
The spotted leprosy, and live the loathed,

Abandoned object of the world's disgust,
Than I would——

Gheral. Now thou art again Costanzo,
They are alike—there is no faith in woman;
Each breath of idle flattery is the wind
That turns this vane, and man the noble bark
Whose hopes are shipwrecked.

Costan. Men are apt to call
This crime, which I premeditate—they weigh
Each act we do, with their own former deeds,
Or others they desire, and then denounce
Horrible crime, what they have never done,
And have no mind to do—it costs them nothing,
And reputation is well bought with sighs,
And outward show of feeling. He whose path
To fame, or happiness thro' beds of roses
Lies open, were a fool to seek a way
Thro' thorny brakes—my happiness is vengeance!
The man who sees a worm before his feet
May brush him gently off; but when the adder
Rears his envenomed crest, he must be crushed—
And I will crush him—should I wait—not wait,
By heaven! the poison is already here;
It rankles at my heart.

Gheral. If after this,
Costanzo, thou would'st let thy vengeance sleep,
I have a charm to wake it into life
Again, with tenfold fury.

Costan. Wake—again—
It hath not slept—it hath not slept, *Gheraldi*.
Let me but fold him to this breast, and see
How close is my embrace; he will not find
Romilda's pliant arms, but he will feel
The hug of desperation, he will find
The true embrace of hate.

Gheral. But she will plead
For mercy for the Duke.

Costan. For mercy! will she!
I will be wond'rous merciful——

Gheral. But yet

'Thou could'st not stab him thro' her breast.

Costan.

Gheraldi,

If that my father's mouldering corse should rise,
In all its buried horrors from the grave,
And raise its interdicting hand, by Heaven,
I'd strike him in despite, tho' through his heart
I reached my father's spirit.

Gheral.

What, altho'

He gave thee back thy forfeit, life.

Costan.

A show—

A show—a boast—a mockery of virtue;
He owed it me, for I had rescued his;
Now fairly shall we meet, and I demand
The chance he dare not shrink from.

Gheral.

Thou hast cause

Yet deeper than thou think'st.

Costan.

There was enough;

A deeper cause were needless—yet speak on,
Speak all thou can'st devise, to chase away
Each lingering cherub that may whisper mercy,
Or speak of aught but carnage—say thy worst;
Say that my wife again—

Gheral.

'Tis that.

Costan.

(*stupidified*)

'Tis what!

Gheral.

Thy wife again is mistress of the Duke!

Costan.

Then truth itself is all a lie: *Gheraldi,*

Beware how you deceive me—righteous God!
I'll not believe it—slave 'tis false—'tis false—
False as thy treacherous heart—I say 'tis false,
You jest with me.

Gheral.

I'm glad, my lord, you think so.

Costan.

The hypocrite—her mock of penitence

Had almost made me love her—love, aye, love!

Nay, start not, sir, my heart was in her power,

And she is lost—oh, woman, woman, woman,

I would have died for thee; nay, worse—have lived

The mark of scorn for thee, and thou art false.

I would have stood upon Vesuvius' brow

And faced the awful thunders: I had dived

Deep in the flames of its volcanic womb

To bring for thee thy slightest wish; and yet
 Thou could'st be false to me! Eternal God,
 Why was I born for this? yet I'll not curse
 My father, that he did beget his son
 To such a heritage of misery:
 I will not curse my mother, nor blaspheme
 Against thy power, oh God! but strike me here—
 Strike me to ashes, lest I do rebel,
 In frenzy's hour, 'gainst thy omnipotence,
 And curse thee for my being.

Gheral. Hold, Costanzo.

Costan. I had forgotten, bear with me, Gheraldi;
 I know not what I say; yet thou did'st tell me
 My wife was with the Duke—was't true? again—
 The paramour of Azo. Oh, my heart
 Revolts against that word; it cannot be,
 Thou art deceived, or I am—mad—I loved her,
 God knows I loved her: could the Duke do for her
 What I have done—love, live in, worship her:
 It was idolatry; but I adored
 With adoration true—and she is false.

Gheral. Great as thy love hath been, should be—

Costan. Not love—

That word is nothing; it was homage pure
 As Heaven's high host do pay their virgin queen.
 Love—I did blindly, madly worship her:
 Heart, soul—

Gheral. Then let thy vengeance be as great
 As is her treason—let it reach them both,
 ('Twere better both should fall than he escape,)
 And when they call for mercy, answer thou—

Costan. Revenge!

Gheral. Aye, right—what mercy and to him—
 To him who—

Costan. Let him look for it, Gheraldi,
 Among the fiends of hell, for I have none:
 The desert tiger may have mercy—I—
 I will have nought but blood—the Duke's heart's blood.

Gheral. And I revenge.

Costan. Come on; blood, blood, Gheraldi.
 (*Exeunt, and the curtain drops.*)

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

Discovers the park and public grounds near the palace of Azo.

Costan. (entering,) "Hear not, oh earth, my tread,"
thou, oh night,
With deeper darkness shade thy sable brow:
And thou, pale empress of the eve, withhold
Awhile thy rising; shut your watchful eyes
Ye everlasting lamps that overhang
Our dreary wilderness, as if to spy
Our deeds of darkness, which the king of day
Doth scorn to shed his light on: ye who bear
The tales of lust and rapine to the ears
Of Heaven's almighty monarch, close awhile.
Your wakeful eyes, or if our deeds to you
Must ever be apparent, pierce ye then
Into the hearts of men, that ye may see
If we do murder—murder is but justice—
Pierce to the souls of men, that ye may see
The thoughts that breed there, and the ugly heaps
Of foul engendering malice: if ye see
The blood we shed, behold the veins that pour it,
How they do swell with pride and lust. Oh, God!
And did'st thou make thy creatures for the sport
Of every breath of fortune? did'st thou put
Within their breasts, (to me the bitterest curse,)
The soul of feeling, that they should not feel?
The pulse where honour beats, that they should give
Its holy name, to glut a master's will,
To every vile corruption of a court,
Turning its sacred offices to shame
And deeds of darkness? I do know thee better;
Since that this heart which thou hast given doth tell me
Thy law, which said in thunder "blood for blood,"
Doth cry aloud "dishonour shall have blood,

Whole seas of blood." I would his arteries beat
 With such a stream as to o'erwhelm the crowd
 Who now do descant on my shame, and I
 Held in my hand the charm to set afloat
 The desolating ocean—here the Duke
 Is wont they say, to take his evening walk,
 And it doth seem to me a fitting spot
 For lust and murder—if the Duke will stand
 For one, methinks I well may play the other.
 Murder! come forth thou little instrument
 Thou never yet hast failed me—who goes there?

(*Enter Romilda.*)

Romil. My husband!

Costan. Strumpet—senseless, shameless strumpet—
 Yet I will calm this tumult—is it thou,
 Romilda?

Romil. Canst thou call me by that name!
 And yet—it does not strike upon my heart
 With such unnatural coldness, as when last
 We met, and I did hear thee in the burst
 Of passion say, "Romilda."

Costan. Answer me
 As thou dost hope to see thy children more—
 Art thou Romilda?

Romil. Nay, my Lord!

Costan. How now,
 Dost understand the word—is this thy name?
 Or dost thou cheat me, showing to mine eyes,
 The form of her that once did bear that name,
 So dear to me?

Romil. Nay, do not question me
 Thus darkly!

Costan. What! you do not understand,
 Art thou Romilda? For to be Romilda
 Is not to have the laughing eye, the lip
 That moist with ruddy ripeness calls the kiss
 Of dear affection, nor the glowing cheek,
 Where with the rose the pensive lily vies
 To form the throne of Love; for it may be
 The eye of smiling passion, and the lip

Inviting wanton dalliance; the bright blush
That thus doth mantle on thy cheek may be
The flush of hot desire; but 'tis to have
A heart as free from thought of guiltiness,
As the pure spring of life was free from taint,
That gushed from Horeb's mountain—answer me,
As thou shalt one day face the Eternal God,
Who will not be deceived.

Romil. I will not say!
(Yet thou might'st well have spared me that dark
thought;)

I am—I was not guilty, if to pray
To wash my pillow with repentant tears,
To lave this bosom with repentant sorrow,
To the accumulated misery
Of shame and thy reproaches, if to suffer
Remorseful agonies, without a groan,
Save for that moment of delirious guilt,
When all my hope was blasted, be to say
“I am again Romilda.” Then Costanzo,
(I will not say unblushing, yet with hopes
Of thy forgiveness, which shall be to me
The harbinger of mercy from above,)
I am again—

Costan. Beware of perjury—
For thou shalt swear it by the Eternal Host
That to thy oath bear witness.

Romil. I do swear
By thy past fondness and thy—

Costan. Swear by Heaven!

Romil. Then Heaven is witness—

Costan. Of thy perjury;
Thou double trait'ress!—get thee to the Duke!
Get thee to Azo!

Romil. I am innocent.

Costan. Innocent! Hear this—look at this ye Heavens!
Oh! that thou hadst been innocent, indeed!
Then had I not exchanged thee for a world,
A paradise of blessings—Innocent,—

Romil. I will not plead to deprecate thy wrath:

But do not think I could betray thee twice.
 I had a heart, Costanzo, which could err;
 I thought 'twas love, but no, 'twas madness—then
 I listened to its dictates; God doth know
 How truly I would weep my life away
 But to recall that moment—'tis in vain!
 'Tis past, and I am lost, beyond the hope
 Of happiness or fame. Yet I had braved
 A thousand-times the anger of the Duke;
 *I would have borne the insults of the world;
 The jeers, the scoffs, the rabble's imprecations;
 I would have suffered countless agonies,
 Ere stoop a second time to wrong thy love,
 Or stain thy honour.

Costan.

Then thou hast not seen

The Duke!

Romil.

I have!——

Costan.

Thou hast, and innocent!

The Duke, and innocent! 'tis mockery—
 What couldst thou plead? Thy virtue? in his cap
 'Tis worn a trophy of his victory—
 Innocent! thou wouldst see thy children then,
 That was the offer for fidelity,
 And I will pay it——
 Why thou art fallen so low, so far beneath
 The common herd of reptiles that do swarm
 This den of infamy, the very Duke,
 Albeit, himself the centre of its filth;
 Thy paramour would tread without remorse
 Thy form beneath his feet, as he would spurn
 The veriest worm——

Romil.

Yet spare me, by these tears

Of penitence sincere; I will not beg.
 I will not say how thou hast bid me hope
 'Twas in thee, I could not be forgiven.
 But, by the memory of what has been,
 By all those hours of dear delight——

Costan.

Oh curses!

I would forget them, rather lose myself—
 Drink down whole draughts of that oblivious stream.

Exhaust pale Lethe's waters tho' the flood
Were formed of flaming billows, than recall
One thought of what has been——

Romil. 'Tis well, Costanzo,
Thy honour yet shall be avenged, and my
Atonement shall be made. Thou wilt remember
When, that the grave has closed its portal on me,
And severed us for ever, thou wilt think
There was some virtue left within this breast,
Howe'er the wintry clouds of guilt obscured
Its sunny influence—if my child shall grow—
If it shall bear one feature like to me,
Do—do not hate her for it—oh! my husband
I have deserved your vengeance—wreak it here!
But do not cast a wretched mother's crimes
Upon her guiltless infant.

Costan. If the girl
Inherit but one look of thine, I'd tear it,
Tho' that her life should follow, from her face;
A mark of infamy—yet no, Romilda—
I—curses on this weakness—I will keep it,
A relic from that ruin, which hath struck
Her father's heart and withered—but for thee,
There is no pardon——

Romil. Wilt thou only say,
That thou wilt pray for me—it were no crime
In death to pardon; say thou wilt not curse me
Before my children—when they have no mother,
If they shall ever ask of me, oh! teach
Thy heart forbearance; teach thy lips to say
Only what I have been, and not alas!
What I am now—'tis all I ask of thee:
I could not sleep contented in my grave,
If that I thought my children's curses, tears,
Of shame, instead of fond affection, nourished
And fed the grass above me——

Costan. No, Romilda,
'Tis true that thou must die, yet memory
Shall dwell upon thy former purity
Hereafter, when the thought shall pass away

Of—but 'tis that which mads me—if it give
 Thee joy to know I will not follow thee
 Beyond the grave, where all thy faults shall lie
 Entombed with thy fair body, oh! how fair,
 With curses, comfort thee. I will but build
 An altar to thy memory, and give thee
 Fit obsequies; ne'er idol yet hath had
 So great a sacrifice as I will give thee;
 Oh, thou shalt have Duke Azo's heart, and there
 Behold if he have loved himself, or thee?

Romil. 'Tis I am guilty, do not soil thy hand
 With regal blood: this heart is open to thee,
 Strike at the breast that wronged thee!

Costan. Hold, no more!
 No more of that; his time will come—for thee,
 'Tis here already—follow, thou shalt see
 Thy children: wherefore can not I say mine?
 But once! and then the debt must instantly
 Be paid, tho' my heart pour at sight of thine,
 Its kindred current—follow me, and then—

Romil. I am content to die—

Costan. But by this hand,
 That would have shrunk from such a deed—but now
 'Twere baseness—come and now—oh death! oh Heaven!
 Why didst thou give this treasure, but to take it
 When I had learned to love, and cherish it?
 Why didst thou place this garden in my view,
 Of roseate flowers, this paradise of sweets,
 To draw my unsuspecting feet among
 A nest of fanged serpents? I shall be,
 At least, if stung, yet brave enough to crush them.
 Follow, and thou shalt see thy children. (*Exit.*)

Romil. Then
 There is no hope of mercy; it is said
 When man rejects the guiltless, there is yet
 One place of refuge left them—they at least
 Within the sheltering bosom of their God,
 A respite find from sorrow; but for me,
 Where shall I turn, the guilty have no God,
 No hope, no Heaven—oh, then be merciful!

And strike me into nothing. I am guilty,
But not abandoned quite to guilt and shame;
Not wholly infamous. (*Enter the Duke.*)

Duke. What voice is that?

Romilda—look not, love, thus desolate,
'Tis Azo calls, nay, do not leave me thus!
Speak but one word, Romilda, (*taking her hand.*)

Romil. Hold—fear,

Away, my Lord, thy touch is poison to me!

Duke. Is all thy love then come to this? away!

Deceitful, cruel woman—poison to thee!

These arms that would have sheltered thee against
Opposing hosts—Romilda!

Romil. Hush! that name——

Duke. Is music to my ears.

Romil. Aye, and to mine!

Such music as the ban dog makes at night,

Howling around the bed of death—sweet music!

Such as the death-watch to the sick man makes,

Or screaming owlets in the midnight dark!

Oh, that Romilda never had been born!

Duke. Thou wilt not curse me so: that wish to me
Is bitter cruelty.

Romil. I curse thee not—

I have much need of mercy, humbleness,

Fasting and prayer, not curses. Thou hast been

To me the cause of endless misery—

And let this be enough, I hate thee not—

Farewell!

Duke. Not yet farewell, Romilda!

Romil. Hold!

I must not hear that name from thee again;

I am, to thee, Costanzo's wife—to him,

Alas! the guilty mistress of the Duke.

Duke. Inconstant, false, deceitful woman—thou

Hast never known what 'twas to love—away,

And I too; I will banish from my heart

This weakness—faithless woman! yet I'll not

Upbraid thee with thy perjury—go tell

Thy husband all his triumph; tell him how

The Duke hath loved, hath worshipped thee—go say
 How I have loved, do love, and tell him too
 How well thou hast avenged his wrongs, go—paint
 This bursting heart—go, fickle woman. Nay,
 I did not bid thee weep.

Romil. Forbear, my Lord!
 If I deserve reproach, thy heart shall say
 If thou should'st cast it on me—false! alas;
 I have been false, indeed, but not to thee.

Duke. Not false to me?

Romil. I gave thee every thing!
 I gave thee honour, happiness, and love!
 I gave thee—what hast thou returned me, Azo?
 Contempt, and misery, and scorn! O thee,
 God knows to thee I have been ever faithful,
 'Thro' guilt and infamy.

Duke. What! hast thou not
 Deserted me, who would have died for thee?
 Did'st thou not now, e'en now prepare a blow
 To kill his heart, who hath but lived in thee?
 You once did say you loved me!

Romil. What I said,
 My lord, thou should'st believe, for I have given
 Such dreadful proof as none have ever given,
 (And would to heaven I had not.) It is true;
 I said I loved thee, and my guilty heart
 Even now, is full of thee: it throbs thy name,
 And echoes back "I love thee"—never more
 Will I return, (think not I am so fallen,)
 A pardoned wanton to Costanzo's bed,
 Deserting thee for any. Oh, my lord,
 How well I loved thee let the ruin show
 That hangs suspended o'er me. That I still love,
 Let these too guilty tears bear witness for me
 Against my own repentance. Look, my lord.
 (*Showing a dagger.*)

Ask here thy answer, if I have not loved thee,
 Too well, too truly!

Duke. And for me thou diest!
 Thou dost not leave me for Costanzo's then!

I am not second in thy heart?

Romil. Would I,
My lord, have yielded thee the dearest jewel,
The only ornament a woman wears
That adds a lustre to her native charms,
Had I esteemed thee second, while there was
Whose power was greater in this breast than thine,
Thou nothing could'st have been.

Duke. And can'st thou then,
So loving me as thou would'st have me think,
Abandon me to——

Romil. Yes, my lord, to prove
To all the world, at least, thou art not one
Of those unmanly, worthless butterflies,
Who, trifling even in their guilt, deceive
The maid they ruin, but to show their prowess,
Whose proudest boast is truth and virtue's scorn,
Who play with reputation as a toy,
Unconscious of its worth. I would redeem
Thy name from such a stain, and be myself
The victim of affection, not the toast,
The wretched plaything of a tavern feast,
The worthless object of a tavern brawl.
We both have erred, my lord, we both will make
Atonement for the error, mine will be
A deep and bitter one, a husband's curse,
My children's execration, all the taunts
Of prudent dames, the hisses of the world,
My own remorse, perhaps Duke Azo's scorn!
These, these will be Romilda's offering
Of peace—for thee, if thou hast ever loved,
(Nor will I wrong myself so much, nor thee,
To think thou hast not,) then thy sacrifice
Shall be the loss of her whom thou hast loved,
Of her whom thou hast ruined—fare thee well.

Duke. And whither goest thou?

Romil. Whence I shall return
No more, the source of discord, to disturb
The unison of hearts that else had been
Complete in friendship.

Duke. Why, thou would'st not sure
Commit self-murder!

Romil. No—not murder, but
Atonement, and do that which will but spare
Disease her timeless victim, and defraud
Remorseful anguish her expected tribute.

Duke. And must we part?

Romil. Nay, wherefore did we meet,
If thus to part be anguish? then it was
Thou truly should'st have sorrowed, Azo! then
The death angel was o'er us; thence, it was
That followed what hath maddened both of us,
And plunged our souls in mutual guilt—but now
The spirit of repentance hovers o'er,
And sanctifies our parting; thus—— (*Enter Gheraldi*)

Gheral. My liege,
Costanzo hath departed, leaving first
Before the council, who implore your presence,
A strange memorial, which, as is most fit,
They would present to thee. (*aside.*) So this is well,
And gains at least an hour for my revenge.

Romil. My lord, as fits give thou thy audience—I
Have said farewell—my lord you follow not! (*Exit.*)

Duke. And must I lose her thus?

Gheral. 'Twere better thus,
Than in a vain attempt, to lose at once
Thyself, and her, and all. (*Exit Duke.*) So now 'tis done
The knell of vengeance dismally doth toll!
And if I fail not deeply in my view,
The carrion raven hovers o'er his prey
Yet living, and expects the livid feast!
So, let him glut himself upon it! I
Will minister to him right cheerfully:
And then let slip the fiends of carnage—smile,
My boy, thou shalt have noble funeral rites!
Smile on thy father. Did they think, because
This arm was palsied, and these joints were stiff
With age and sorrow, that they could not escape me?
Let them beware the adder in his coil,
If they despise the crushed constrictor's power!

Oh, they shall find the jaws not fangless yet,
Where they have spurned the body; they shall find
The blighting curses of a father's heart,
Shall stab, when he has not a weapon left
But bitter imprecations! (*Exit, and the curtain drops.*)

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A room in Costanzo's house. Costanzo and Gheraldi.

Costan. No passion now, Gheraldi! thou hast seen
My heart was moved; I own it, 'twas enough,
Gheraldi, to arouse my all of man—
I felt—I felt it keenly: but the calm
That follows on the tempest, when its force
Subsides, is not unruffled as this breast;
And now——

Gheral. Thou dost forgive them!

Costan. What! forgive them;
When Judas would betray his Lord; he smiled,
And I smile now—it is the smile of pardon,
'The harbinger of peace, looks it not so?
I will be merciful beyond all hope—
So merciful—if I had yesterday
But met him, I had stabbed him ere he spake
The flattering he hatches, and had lost
By that one blow, Gheraldi, such a feast
Of cool, premeditate revenge, as years,
Uninterrupted ages could not pay,
Of never ending happiness; but now,
Oh, how my soul regales upon the thought!
By Heaven he hath not wronged me, I will have
So just a price for all he robbed me of!
I will but take him by the throat, and say
How I do hate him: I'll but hug him so,
As never maid hath hugged her paramour,

Or man his mortal enemy; and yet
So coolly I will do it!

Gheral. And with her?

Costan. Gheraldi, she must die! *It is in vain!*
Through each most secret corner of my soul
I would discover aught to rescue her
From the impending blow—it cannot be—
The rod of justice is within my hand,
And I will wield it firmly!

Gheral. Can you then
Forget the many happy hours?

Costan. 'Tis that—
The memory of which doth sit upon
My arm, and presses with an iron weight
Its strength to nothing—those were happy days,
Gheraldi, I would fain forget them now!

Gheral. Renew them rather!

Costan. Never—she was one,
Alone by Heaven appointed here to rule
My destiny, and with her blandishments,
(And she was wondrous fair) to guide me on
In one uninterrupted course of love,
Of happiness, of virtue, thro' the road
That leads to lasting peace; or else designed
A blight upon my honour, and a curse,
For some unknown, some unrepented sin;
To plague me with a mockery of bliss,
To offer to my thirsty lips the cup
Of pleasure, with destroying poison drugged.
Fate chose the latter—cursed me with a wife,
The fairest, loveliest, dearest, and—oh God!—

Gheral. But—

Costan. But I will have such revenge—revenge
So deep, so bloody—I will feast on it,
Dream of it, live on it—

Gheral. The Duke should fall.
But when that he is dead, I would, my Lord,
Your children do demand it; you should take
Your wife—

Costan. Gheraldi, I am on the ground

Where once the conquering Roman stood; and dwell
With wonder on his glories!—in my breast
I feel reviving all the ancient fire
Of those free happy ages. Not alone
In Italy, shall Roman bosoms beat
With honourable feeling. They did shed,
And so will I, the blood most dear to them,
When honour bade the offering. Brutus gave
His sons, the heritors of all his worth,
To ignominious death: and did the steel
Of the Centurion, when he slew his child
So innocently fair, in honour's cause,
Draw blood less virtuous than Romilda's?—I
Have deeper cause for vengeance yet than they.
The father cannot be dishonoured, as
The husband, in his wife's incontinence.
Yes, she must die;* but I'll not stain this hand,
Nor mar that fair and beautiful creation
Of matchless excellence, and loveliness,
With blood of hers. She shall have time to pray, too,
That men may say, I am no murderer
Of the immortal soul, when I do strike
The derogate frail body. I will be
Avenger, not assassin—she must die;
But what of that? all men must do so: I
Shall follow her full soon; and for the Duke—
Oh, we shall be a glorious fellowship
As ever trod the melancholy way
Of silent death; and when they would condemn
The murder, I will bid them look upon
The happy picture of connubial bliss,
When in the garden (formed by God's own hand)
The serpent thrust himself, and poisoned all
The gifts that God had offered; such was then,
So pure, so virtuous the mutual love
We bore each other, when the spoiler came,
And like the first arch enemy, entwined

* I am afraid I have been guilty of an unintentional plagiarism in this passage; but on the discovery, it was too late to correct it, for the work was gone to press.

His deleterious folds around the heart,
Where virgin modesty, enshrined had kept
Her vestal fire: he robbed me of her love
That was so dear to me——

Gheral. But since her fall
Have you so wholly lost the memory
You were her husband?

Costan. 'Tis the husband's curse,
Gheraldi, to adore the woman whom
He once hath loved, for ever; he doth graft
Too oft upon a blasted trunk, his hopes,
His heart, his love, his fame, and there they wither.

Gheral. But yet I would not you should punish
So deeply. Heaven 'tis true did curse the tempter;
So would I you should slay the ravisher,
But left the woman to the secret pangs
Of bitter conscience; so do thou Costanzo!
She is, if not thy wife, the mother yet
That bore thee these thy children!

Costan. Who shall say,
The children that I rear, to me, are mine?
This Duke, or any silver duke perhaps,
Or other wanton ambling sycophant
That wears a feather in his cap, or plumes
His form with borrowed beauties, may have been
The father of my children—ask my wife;
She knows, not I—my children! that is false—
A flattering lie; they are Duke Azo's children!

Servant. My Lady is without, and waits to be
(If it so please you) ushered to your presence.

Gheral. Thrice welcome Lady to thy home.
(*Enter Romilda*)

Romil. You mock me,
Gheraldi, with that word!

Costan. He does indeed!
Thy home, Romilda, must be in the grave;
My honour, nay, thy honour doth demand it,
And who shall raise his voice 'gainst honour's call,
Opposing its demands? Thou camest to see

Thy children—thou shalt see them. Good Gheraldi,
I pray you lead them hither. (*Exit Gheraldi.*) How is
this?

Why madam do you weep? I did not call you
Here, to upbraid you: sit, and I will speak
All that remains for me on earth to say,
(For what may follow, I will give account
For thee, and me, before the throne of Heaven)
In which you must obey me You remember,
'Tis but a few years since, before the altar
Of an attesting God I took your hand,
And vowed to honour, love, and cherish you:
How I have kept that vow, thy heart shall say
For both of us. That I did cherish thee,
The hapless offspring of a hapless pair,
Not guilty, for I will not say thou art,
But fate, the author of our misery;
Not guilty then, but most unhappy parents——
Let these bear witness, I did cherish thee.
That I did love thee, let this blighted heart,
This bursting agony—I love thee still,
Too well, too fondly,—let this madness show,
This weakness that unmans, and throws me thus
Almost forgiving at thy feet—say thou,
Romilda, did I love thee? Yet a while,
A word, and I have done—one part remains
Unfinished of my vow: but I will pay
E'en to the uttermost, its smallest word:
I swore to honour thee; receive then this,
A token that I do. Thou canst not live
With honour, this (*giving her a vial*) will teach thee
how to die.

Take it Romilda, from thy husband's hands;
A dearer pledge than he hath offered yet,
Of honour, love, and tenderness to thee.
Weep not, Romilda, we shall meet again——
Yet what of that—thou dost not weep for me!
Well, be it so.

Romil.

My lord!

Costan.

Oh, misery!

She once was mine—what wouldst thou?

Romil. Wilt thou not
Extend the hand of mercy ere I go,
To one who—pardon me—farewell, my lord,
Without one sign of pity, one to say
“Farewell, God bless thee,” will I take my way,
Without one cheering smile:

Costan. *Romilda*—I—
I do forgive thee——

Romil. Heaven reward thee for it!

Costan. There, take my hand—ha! what is that—
Duke?

Romil. Nay!

Costan. Hell and furies, dost thou bring it, ha!
To brave me to thy face! Who gave thee this?
I never put it there! Who gave thee this,
Detested strumpet? (*Enter Gheraldi with the children*)

Chil. Mother!

Romil. Oh, my children!

Chil. Speak to her, father!

Costan. Have ye learned it too,
To cheat me with that name: your father—who—
Who taught you that? 'Tis false—your mother then
Can best direct you to your father. I
Am not—or if ye be indeed my children,
Why raise ye not your little hands to hiss
The shameless wanton that ye call your mother?
Why spit ye not upon her?—get ye hence!
Ye are too like to her—a bastard breed,
I know ye not—away—(*Exit.*)

Romil. Eternal God,
Thou dost not temper to the stricken deer,
The tempest of thy vengeance!—and my children,
My children taught to curse me!

Costan. (*without.*) Off, Gheraldi! (*Enter:*
So madam, you have ready at your beck
Your faithful ministers!—The Duke is here
To rescue thee. He hath forgot, it seems,
A husband and a father's rights——

Romil. I swear,

By every sacred attribute !

Costan. 'Tis false !

False as thy double heart !

Romil. Nay, kill me then,
Since I am fallen so low;—yet I of this
Am innocent——

Costan. Indeed ! then thou shalt die

A Martyr: look at innocence—'tis well—

How innocent she is !

Romil. Nay, spare me this,
This double death of torture——

Gheral. (*Without.*) Nay, my lord,
You pass not here !

Costan. (*Shutting and locking the door.*) Now let him
come: these doors

Are sacred to my privacy, and I

Will show him to his teeth a husband's power,

Spite of his boasted privilege. The poison——

The poison that I gave thee——come——one prayer,
If thou wouldst offer it; thy time is short.

Romil. Spare me, my husband, yet a moment, spare
me !

Costan. So then thou wilt not pray—the poison——
come——

Romil. (*dropping it.*) Hah !

Costan. What is that—infernal fiends of hell ?

Wouldst thou that that should save thee—ha, the Duke !

Romil. Oh, yet have mercy for our children's sake !

Costan. The portal yields, I hear him on the stair !

Romil. My husband !

Costan. Hah ! that name is mine alone,

That I may wash away the stain upon it;

For that I have a dagger yet, receive.

From me 'an injured husband's curse—from me,

Thou flattering mischief, take a husband's vengeance !
(*He rushes wildly out with her in his arms, and returns
in a few moments.*)

She's dead—my wife is dead—her blood is here !

Her blood is on my soul—hah, mercy—who,

Who will have mercy ! I had none—the fires

Of hell, that burn forever, are not red
 As these assassin hands! yet 'twas but just;
 She should have died. I will not think of it.
 Who says 'tis murder—I deny the charge!
 'Twas honest, honest, honourable vengeance!
 But she is dead, and the melodious tones
 Of that celestial instrument are stopped,
 That made such heavenly music; sweeter far
 Than summer zephyrs o'er the breathing harp
 Of soft Æolian numbers—oh, my wife,
 Romilda - oh, my own Romilda—wife—
 Answer, and I will bless thee! Speak to me,
 Tho' but to curse me! (*looking at hands which are covered with blood.*) 'These are bitter curses!
 Yet, 'tis not true that I did murder her—
 Great spirits of my fathers rise, and say
 That you do justify me. 'Tis for you,
 For your unsullied honours, I would keep
 Mine spotless as your own; yet is the sign
 Of bloody murder printed on these hands
 In everlasting characters. These stains (*a knocking,*)
 Will witness, for me, what I have been doing;
 (*unlocks the door, and conceals his hands under his robe*)
 So now—come in!

Gheral. I did not think to find thee
 Alone, and thus disturbed.

Costan. I am alone,
 Gheraldi, in the world, without one soul
 To soothe or pity me—behold—say where
 Is he will take this blood-stained hand, and say
 "Be thou my friend," for I'm a murderer—
 A woman's murderer, a cowardly,
 A wretched, poor assassin. Look, Gheraldi!
 'Tis blood! Romilda's blood, which I had sworn
 To cherish as my own!

Gheral. Thou hast not slain
 Thy wife. Costanzo?

Costan. Hah! my wife, my wife!
 No! I have slain the mistress of the Duke!

Gheral. And left him living?

Costan. Have I then no wife !

Gheral. Thou wretched fool——

Costan. Say on.

Gheral. Is this the man

Whom conquering millions feared; is this the man

To whom a nation should entrust its care?—

How dwindled to a midnight murderer

Of unresisting, unprotected woman !

Is this the man to whom a?——

Costan. 'Tis the man,

Gheraldi, whom a thousand wrongs have wrought

To frenzy and despair—it is a man

On whom the vials of eternal wrath

Are emptied with a hand so pitiless,

That misery hath not another cup

To offer to a wretch so lost as I.

Behold unbraced I bare me to the storm—

Why strike ye not ye muttering thunderbolts !

Ye blasting lightnings wherefore hold !

Gheral. Because,

Costanzo, they have left thee for a deed

Which should ere now have been the first among

The terrors of the world—thou should'st have struck

His heart, and her's had withered soon enough

Without thy aid.

Costan. I struck it nobly then !

I hurled the living flash against the trunk

That had ignobly mouldered but for that !

Gheral. Thy vengeance then is satisfied, my lord,

I had hoped better things; howe'er, this arm

Is not so old but it can right itself.

Farewell ! thy vengeance is complete—but mine

Shall have a nobler victim in the Duke—

Duke Azo falls by me !

Costan. By Heaven 'tis false !

Thou might'st as well attempt to snatch the prey,

That gluts the famished tiger, from his jaws,

As pass between my arm and my revenge !

Complete - complete—the universe shall feel

Its desolation ere it be complete!

What these poor drops in sacrifice, fulfil
 The unsated hate I bear him ! these suffice
 To pay the debt he owes me ! When the rain
 Of summer storms shall quench Vesuvius' flames,
 And hush the fiery furnace in her womb,
 Then will I be appeased, but not till then !
 Death bounds not my revenge !

Gheral. I'm glad of this,
 For now I am assured I have not been
 (Reposing confidence in thee) deceived,
 Hast thou forgot the Duke is in thy palace?
 Hast thou forgot he followed to thy house
 Romilda, to protect her?

Costan. Did he so?
 He has protected her—oh, vast protection!
 We'll see this mighty champion—go, *Gheraldi!*
 Conduct him hither—we shall try his prowess.

(*Exit, Gheraldi. A pause*)
 Why does this silence fright me? (*The child enters from
 the door through which Costanzo had borne Romilda*)
 Ah, my boy!

Why what is this? Eternal providence!
 The son hath bathed him in his mother's blood!
 Comest thou to blast me with that sight—away.

Child. My mother, oh, my mother!

Costan. What's the matter
 Silence, ill-omened raven. How my heart
 Is changed to stone; I could not thus have spoken
 This morning to him, for the worth of worlds;
 But now—nay, do not weep—my boy—my son—
 Son of my murdered wife—'tis horrible,
 Too horrible. (*enter Gheraldi and the Duke.*)

Duke. Costanzo!

Costan. Hah! hah! hah !
 Great God thou hast not vainly put the strength
 Of all thy thunders here—again, say on,
 Costanzo!

Duke. What is this? where is thy wife?
 Whence is thy arrogance?

Costan. There is enough

In but one word of thine to rouse my soul,
 Tho' it were plunged a thousand fathoms deep
 In Lethe's waters of forgetfulness.
 Say on—another name—that Heaven itself
 May shut its ears against thee, and the gates
 Of living mercy, startled at the sound,
 Reject thy prayer with horror, triple barred
 Against thy supplications. What, my lord,
 Thy eloquence is dumb ! but I have that
 Shall rouse it—if there be a fiend in hell
 More horrid to thy sight than all the rest,
 I will invoke his aid—behold ! (*Showing his bloody hands.*)

Duke.

Romilda !

Costan. Romilda—yes, she calls thee from the grave !
 (*Springing on him.*) 'Tis vain to struggle, all the
 strength is here

Of Hercules—go seek her, ravisher,
 In other worlds. (*Stabs him.*)

Duke.

Romilda !

Costan.

Hah ! hah ! hah !

Duke. 'Tis very dark. (*Dies.*)

Costan.

Then get thee to the realms

Of burning hell—now thou art satisfied,
 Shade of Romilda ! I have done my part.

Gheral. And nobly.

Costan.

Hush—be silent—now I stand

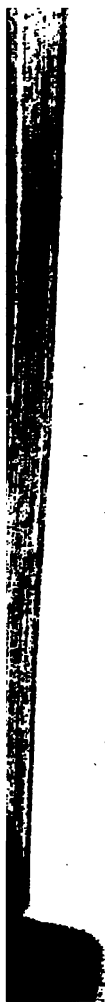
A spotless victim; strike me when you will
 Ye loud artillery of heaven: behold,
 Unconquered I have lived—no arm but thine,
 Almighty God, hath triumphed o'er Costanzo !
 I'm sick at heart—but—but I am revenged !

(*Falls in Gheraldi's arms, and the curtain drops.*)

THE END.



*The following Stanzas are submitted to your generous
deration ; should they elicit an approving smile, it may
'en the sleep of the "Young Dreamer," and trouble
world with some additional cantos ; if not, "requiescat
in pace."*



THE YOUNG DREAMER.

Why was the world so fair? The breath of morn
 scarce fann'd the dews of rapture, and the boy
 led his green head in pride, as if 'twere born
 to reach heaven's blushing canopy, where Joy
 Hope with quick'ning power would gaily fling
 its young growth a robe of endless spring.

Why was the world so kind? His every hour
 was robed in smiles, his tender form caress'd,
 fortune cast on him the generous power
 of blessing others, and of being blest,
 while Friendship strew'd his flowers with tender care,
 and Love breath'd o'er the scene to add new sweetness
 there.

Why was the world so dark? The boy awoke
 from a fairy dream—and all were gone!
 The forms so lov'd, the kindling lights that broke
 upon his soul, had fled—he was alone,
 and memory linger'd, when of all bereft,
 to show the desolation left.

And she, he loved, forsook her faith, to bow
 Before a tyrant father's stern decree,
 Who grasped at wealth, and, with unblushing bro
 Pandar'd his child to licens'd infamy!
 Aye, to a wretch whose gold, like Caspian sand,
 Lost all its lustre in his niggard hand.

He felt the nameless burning pang that bids
 The mad'ning blood rush to its source, and swe
 The heart to agony. His fever'd lids
 Found no relief, no gentle tear-drop fell,
 Till sorrow's kindest nurse her influence shed,
 And strew'd her poppies o'er his wearied head.

Oh, Fancy! how thy strange creative power
 Delights in contradictions; oft prepares
 To startle joy and darken pleasure's bower
 With hideous forms and visionary cares;
 Yet breathes o'er sleeping sorrow, to impart
 Some kindling spell to soothe the breaking heart.

That charm was his—he sat in loneliness,
 Amidst the shadows of a tower whose high
 And frowning ruins looked o'er captive Greece,
 A silent legend of the days gone by;
 As in defiance of the power that gave
 The land of glory to the turban'd slave!

And all was still, save when some falling stone
 Wak'd echo from her half-form'd classic dream,
 And proud Lepanto from her ocean throne,
 Threw o'er the shades of night a splendid gleam,
 In welcome of the few who could not sleep
 In chains, but strove for freedom on the deep.

But lo! the tower has left its vision'd base,
 And tumbled into ruins! Rous'd to men
 A thousand Grecians, rally in its place,
 Like hunted tigers battling for their den.
 While shadowy falchions of the mighty dead
 Leap from their sheaths to cleave the Moslem head.

Thy sound hath rous'd a nation—and see where
 Like desert wild fire nurs'd by noxious breath,
 The foe expires amidst the purer air
 That breathes of Liberty! Each cry of death
 Echo'd by thousands, whose first virgin kiss
 Became pollution for a tyrant's bliss!

The listening mermaid on the joyful wave
 Has thrown her beauteous hair—rous'd by the cry,
 The water-nymph deserts her rocky cave,
 To hear the tale from zephyr passing by:
 It nears the skies! Each shade by rapture driven,
 Starts up, and half essays to leave his heaven!

Oh why should fancy woo the dreamer off
To fair Italia, whose proud spirit lies
Buried beneath her soil, and, at each scoff
Of Europe's minions, struggles to arise,
Heaves the proud mountain with convulsive throe,
And breathes the fire her children dare not show.

No more in regions where a Byron toil'd,
He seeks the sacred ground a Byron sung,
The land by foes and treacherous friends despoil'd,
Whence man's self-nam'd deliverer's have wrung
The worshipp'd relics, dear in misery,
And, having forg'd their chains, dare, dare to call them
free !

She sleeps in sorrow ! but, of other days,
A thrilling voice, will chase the pearly drops,
Upon her native barriers bid her gaze,
And ask no world beyond their snowy tops.
Italia wake ! your sloth, your shame resign,
And plunge them with your chains deep in your mountain
shrine !

It was a faded form, on which some fiend
Had laid his burning fingers—for distress
Had blanch'd the cheeks of manhood, and he lean'd
Over a couch of infant loveliness;
It was a simple lay that met the ear,
But breath'd in tones so sad, 'twere pain to hear.

Sleep on, my boy! nor hear my strain,
 I would not cloud thy early beam ;
 Ne'er may thy riper years retain
 Remembrance of thy infant dream,
 Or bring the last sad scene before thee,
 A dying father watching o'er thee.

It were too much, thou couldst not gaze
 Upon mine image, see still there
 The ling'ring smile of happier days,
 While feeling murmur'd "where, oh, where
 Is he, whose notes so sad and wild
 Thrill'd o'er his lov'd, his orphan child?"

May thy young hopes, secure from harm,
 Be cloth'd in everlasting green,
 And should thy country claim thy arm,
 Be all thy father would have been,
 Ere sorrow tore him from the bloom
 Of manhood to a nameless tomb!

On! midst the thickest of her foes
 Hew thee a path of death, and ere
 The yawning breach of fate reclose,
 Plunge, plunge, my Decius, let thy bier
 Be worthy of a patriot's son,
 Thy glory, and thy country's one!

Start not, my boy ! I would not break
Thy infant slumbers; let thy head
Rest on my bosom—thou may'st wake
When mine shall find a colder bed !
Sleep, sleep, my darling, for my strain
Of woe shall rouse thee not again.

Why ceas'd the mournful lay? the infant form
Now hangs delighted o'er those pallid lips,
And strives to ope them with embraces warm,
Unconscious 'tis the dew of death he sips.
Sweet flower of Eden, vainly would'st thou give
Thy fragrance to the grave—thou can'st not bid

The scene was changed—the dreamer seem'd to
Amidst a new creation, and the blaze
Of evening glory glanced upon a lake
Whose battled shores could tell of fiercer days
Its waters fresh, as when young nature's birth
Oped the pure fountains of exulting earth.

A noble bark, rich freighted with the brave,
Lay with her giant pinions furl'd in sleep,
Yet still appeared to kiss the wanton wave,
And woo her mighty shadow in the deep:
Her flag half-stolen from the hues of even,
And studded with the burning lamps of heaven.

Oh, how his spirit bounded—and the air,

The sky, the wave, the very earth he trod,
Grew purer when he saw that banner there,

The stars, the rainbow smile of freedom's god !
But hark ! no warlike strains approach the strand—
That air—I've heard it in my native land.

Why should the eyes of the sailor boy fill ?

'Tis not the shamrock that grows on yon hill;
Bright is the verdure where liberty reigns,
Ireland still dearer expiring in chains.

Think me not cold and ungrateful to you,

Bare but my heart—if its throbbings are true,
All will be found there—the gen'rous the kind,
My mother and country still deeper enshrined.

There was a moment's pause—as if the sound

Were lost in smothered sobs, and once again
Essayed to rise, but all too feeble found,

Until a stronger voice caught up the strain,
And breath'd its ruder melody, to chase
The starting tear from budding manhood's face.

What is the loss you so fondly deplore ?

Rouse up, and sigh for thy country no more !

Look to this land, thy asylum in danger,

Thy shelter in sorrow, the home of the stranger.

**Dream not that Erin alone can be blest,
Thy Liffy may flow in the wilds of the west,
Where justice shall guard thee, and virtue controul,
And the iron shall blush ere it enter thy soul.**

**Here shall the sons of a Wallace and Tell
Fancy the climes they defended so well;
The fig-tree shall live where no tyrant can spoil,
And the vineyards of Italy bloom on our soil.**

**Child of the Highlands ! why nourish the flame
Where the tartan and bonnet are badges of shame?
Can hope shield thy babes from the pitiless blast,
Or mem'ry rebuild the sad wreck of the past?**

**Highlander, fly from the desolate spot,
Tho' dearer in ruins thy own native cot,
Haste to our hills with the kindred that love thee,
And think thy Ben Lomond is tow'ring above thee!**

**Thou'lt not be alone, there are hearts here as true,
Will love thee still dearer for loving her too,
And the maid of thy bosom, when safe from all danger,
Will sing thee to sleep in the home of the stranger.**

**There was a rush of feeling, and a tear
Too warm for fancy, kissed the sleeper's cheek,
And something mingled with his dreams so dear,
A voice by nature sweet, by sickness weak,
That mem'ry wandered to enjoy once more
The scenes where that dear voice was heard before.**

The spell was o'er him; yet it was a dream
 That near'd reality. It bade depart
 The gayer visions, which but threw a gleam
 Of distant splendour—this had warm'd his heart,
 And like the smile of spring, that pillows fair
 Its head on winter snows, chang'd all to verdure there.

Harp of the sad one! were thy thrilling chords
 Breath'd on by angels, thou could'st ne'er impart
 One half the sacred glôw that mocks at words,
 But burns within its cemetery the heart;
 The passion which no change could ever move
 The vestal fervour of a sister's love.

And I have felt it. Sister of my soul,
 Oh that I could forever have been near
 Thy gentle presence, to remove the bowl
 Of sorrow from thy lips, and fondly hear
 The words of sweet instruction, while each tone
 Recall'd the golden days when joys was all our own.

My morn of being! How the mounting soul
 Joy'd in the coming glory—every ray
 Seem'd but a pathway to the nameless goal
 Of young animation, as the embryo day
 Peep'd o'er the hills of time in infant play,
 To kiss the dews of night, it could not chase away.

But thou wert with me then—and every spot,
My morning star, was hallow'd by thy smile,
Thy blue path still is there, but thou art not—
My morning star, where rovest thou the while?
Vainly I seek thee o'er the once lov'd hill,
And bid the morn return that I may see thee still.

END OF CANTO I.

Fugitive Offerings.



ELEGY ON J. D. P.

Oh, thou wast so pure, it was soothing to find
 In a world cold as ours a spirit so kind;
 Thou hast wept at the sorrows of others alone,
 Thou hast smiled at misfortune when solely thy own.

The lily unspotted above thee should grow,
 And the innocent violet over thee blow;
 Thy virtues demand not a record of stone,
 They are 'graved on the heart, and with that die alone,

And this the inscription:—If friendship and love
 Are dear to that spirit that ruleth above,
 Thou art gone to enjoy in his bright world the bliss,
 That sickness and sorrow denied thee in this.

Oh! chide not! if I have no grief,
 In outward show,
 Or seek in pleasure short relief
 From inward woe.
 Oh! chide not! for the burning tear
 Falls sad alone,
 The wounded heart hath something dear
 To rest upon,
 The treasur'd mem'ry of the past
 Time cannot dim, or fortune blast.

Frown not ! that bowl but mock'd my thirst;
 In fancy's dream
 Reflected all, too fondly nurst,
 My boyhood's beam:
 My star of hope ! can I forget
 The light it gave?
 The hour it rose in joy, or set
 Within the grave?
 The liquid hails a stranger drop,
 'Tis sorrow's offering at the top.

Mark not my tongue ! its careless flow
 May pain conceal,
 Why should I cloud my friends with wee
 They cannot feel?
 Can I receive a father's smile
 With tearful eye?
 Or should a brother's care beguile,
 Not check the sigh?
 Then chide not ! tho' my grief's unknown,
 Its sacred offering falls alone.

TO H——

A little boon, dear lady ! lend
 A moment to my humble lay,
 The heartfelt offering of a friend
 Who hails with joy thy natal day.

Why 'neath December's frosty shroud
Appears the blooming form of May?
Or sky unsullied with a cloud?
Lo! it is Harriet's natal day.

The sun assumes a warmer glow,
The moon emits a brighter ray,
E'en rugged winter smoothes his brow,
And smiles for Harriet's natal day.

Oh happy be thy early spring,
Let care take wings and fly away,
And each revolving season bring
New lustre to thy natal day.

When winter shows his dreary face,
And time dyes nature's mantle gray,
Still let the smiles thy features grace
Which beam on this thy natal day.

And when the lamp of life grows pale,
The scenes that love you fade away,
There is a hope which cannot fail,
In Heaven shall dawn thy natal day!

MY OWN LOVED HOME.

Air—" *Love's Young Dream.*"

The tree that blooms in conscious pride
 'Neath eastern skies,
 Remove it to our mountain's side,
 It droops and dies:
 The stranger soil disown's the guest,
 No genial breezes come,
 Oh! it vainly seeks the warmth that blest
 Its own loved home!

Tho' youthful fancy roam at will,
 Too fond of change,
 Tho' varied prospects bid it still
 Unwearied range,
 Should sorrow stain the manly cheek,
 No soothing accents come,
 Oh! the beating heart will vainly seek
 Its own loved home!

Oh, think not, tho' I gaily smile,
 That peace dwells here;
 The careless jest may oft beguile
 The starting tear:
 But let the angry tempest roar,
 I've still my native dome;
 It is the rainbow of my soul,
 My own loved home.

How oft I watch with wild delight
 The midnight queen;
 In fancy trace the beams that light
 The hallowed scene.
 Each spot that knew the wayward boy
 Shall brighter still become,
 Still dear in sorrow as in joy,
 My own loved home.

Farewell ye smiles, as false as bright,
 Now dear no more,
 Farewell, the exile's gloomy night
 Shall soon be o'er.
 And, when fatigued with life's alarms,
 The wand'rer ceased to roam,
 Oh, then receive him in thy arms,
 My own loved home!

TO ———.

With a Musical Work-Box.

Take this trifle, love, and give it
 Real worth in being thine;
 Frown not on the toy, receive it,
 Be its fate a type of mine:

H

For 'twill sweetly soothe thee, dearest,
 If thy hand awake the strain,
 Breathe its joy when thou art nearest,
 In thy absence sleep again.

When my Mary breaks its slumbers,
 Think of one who lives for you;
 The same touch that wakes its numbers,
 Bids him thrill to rapture too!

MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.

Fast flow the tears from fond affection's eye
 Where the long grass in sadness seems to wave.
 Hark! 'tis her fading boy that breathes the sigh,
 And claims a refuge in his mother's grave.

Tho' flattering hopes our anxious fears beguiled,
 Daily we saw her much loved image fade,
 While undisturb'd by fear, she sweetly smiled
 At the sad havoc dire disease had made.

Without a sigh she left life's fleeting charms,
 Its setting sun with holy lustre fired,
 And, clasped within her dear Redeemer's arms,
 Her Heaven began ere yet the lamp expired.

E'en when her cheeks were blanch'd by dews of death,
 Whose cold embrace had froze the genial tide,
 E'en when her wasted form resigned its breath,
 The lovely ruin spoke its former pride.

The placid brow, the calm, yet joyful face,
 Bright testimonials of the happy dead,
 The seraph smile, that still retained its place,
 Spoke where the bright inhabitant had fled.

Affection strives in vain with warmest praise
 To reach the worth *affection* could not save,
 Here let the aching heart its tribute raise
 In sweet remembrance o'er my mother's grave.

HARP OF THE BROKEN HEART.

Dark was the night o'er the turbulent billow,
 Mocking the earth in her mantle of snow,
 When Edwin arose from his comfortless pillow,
 And tuned his lone harp to the accents of woe.

The wild burst of sorrow his manly breast heaving,
 His pallid cheek wet with the tear of despair,
 No balm of affection his anguish relieving,
 No kind soothing voice of condolence was near.

Dread o'er the scene was the tempest fiend gliding,
 Loud roar'd the blast, but it shook not his form,
 He felt not its keenness, he heard not its chiding,
 For in his own breast rag'd a deadlier storm.

Strains of my infancy! why should I raise ye?
 Fled is the spirit that lived in your lay,
 Hush'd is the voice that delighted to praise ye,
 Cheer'd all your wand'rings, illumin'd your way.

Once I was happy, could boast of possessing
 All that was lovely, and faithful and fair;
 Bright rose my morning, replete with each blessing,
 Gaily I laugh'd at the phantom of care.

What was the world, when I liv'd for one only?
 Swift from his throne the dread messenger came,
 Darken'd the vision, and left me thus lonely,
 Blasted my spirit, and wither'd my frame.

Is there a friend that from memory will borrow,
 Aught that can hallow the wanderer's urn?
 One who will feel for the victim of sorrow,
 Bid the rude foot from his resting place turn?

Yes, I must hope, to those kind hearts appealing,
 Who knew all my errors, yet loved as before,
 Some eyes, as my knell calls the warm tide of feeling,
 Will weep for the friend who shall greet them no more.

What, tho' the priest breathes no requiem o'er me,
 It dims not my mem'ry, nor blights the green sod ;
 My proud spirit flies to the mother that bore me,
 Appealing from man to the throne of his God.

Why dost thou cling? thou shalt not be forsaken,
 Dear are the friends who shall watch o'er my boy,
 'Till from the dream of existence he waken,
 And welcome the morning in regions of joy.

Oft shall the angel whose image thou bearest,
 Breathe o'er thy slumbers a heavenly charm,
 Oft shall thy father, when dangers are nearest,
 Hover around to protect thee from harm.

Harp of the broken heart! cease thy complaining,
 No one will echo the querelous strain,
 Hush'd be thy voice, scarce a chord is remaining,
 "I never will waken thy numbers again."

INVOCATION.

Spirit of joy and bliss ! fly not the shrine
 Where anxious love in adoration kneels,
 Where passion hallow'd by a glance divine,
 But breathes in whispers half that passion feels :
 Return ! what lovelier temple can you seek ?
 Restore your smiles to grace my Mary's cheek.

Airs of my native land ! respect the flower
 That woos your kind embrace with aspect pale ;
 For me alone reserve your Upas power,
 But breathe for her the Arab's spicy gale ;
 Oh ! let the blush of health and gladness speak
 Amidst the roses on my Mary's cheek.

Angel of health ! Oh steal the brightest glow
 That conscious beauty wakes in Hebe's face,
 And, with a magic transfer, bid it know
 A fairer seat, a lovelier resting place.
 Angel of health ! thy roses need not seek
 A sweeter home—strew them on Mary's cheek.

'Twas not a sigh ! thy willing ear
 But fancied pain ;
 Passion has ceas'd to struggle here,
 Tho' love remain :

Or, if a sigh escaped my breast,
 It was the last,
 And only fled to join the rest,
 Not mourn the past.

'Twas not a tear! thy anxious eye
 Hath wrong'd my cheek;
 Its burning blush would bid it dry
 Ere shame could speak.
 But, if one recreant drop was there
 When feeling fled,
 'Twas manhood bade the last sad tear,
 Go, join the dead.

AT NIGHT.

When Sol has slept,
 When Heaven has wept,
 And Cynthia sheds auspicious light,
 I bless the hour
 And seek the bower,
 Where love's elysium blooms at night.

The thrilling kiss,
 The look of bliss,
 The mutual tokens of delight,
 And rapture's tear,
 Proclaim how dear
 The souls, that meet to love at night.

Oh never yet,
 Can I forget,
 'Midst pleasure's dream or sorrow's blight,
 The ray of joy,
 That blest her boy,
 When some one call'd me her's at night.

SERENADE.

Wake, lady wake! the wand'rer's strain
 Floats wildly in the midnight air,
 And echo breathes the notes again
 That love and friendship yield the fair:
 Oh! ope those melting orbs of light
 And rob the slumberer of his prize;
 Let watchful love forget 'tis night,
 Beneath the lustre of those eyes;
 Wake, Lady wake!

Wake, Lady wake! the trem'ling moon,
 Looks gently from the varied sky,
 And asks from earth the sweetest boon,
 The magic light of Mary's eye:
 Oh answer Cynthia's silent plea,
 And hear the Minstrel's numbers soar,
 Her smiles have longer courted thee,
 But oh! they could not love thee more.
 Wake, Lady wake

THE MEETING OF SOULS.

There's a moment of sorrow to memory dear,
 When friends must be parted, and hearts will remain;
 When hope sweetly mingles a smile with a tear,
 And whispers, "why mourn? we shall soon meet again!"

There's a moment of transport, we never forget,
 When the lips that were distant, are joined with a kiss,
 When all that affection would breathe ere they met,
 Is lost in the eloquent silence of bliss.

There's a moment that misery claims as her own
 When the last dreadful struggle of nature is o'er,
 And the lonely one starts as he echo's the groan,
 The spirit has pass'd! shall we ever meet more?

Shall we ever meet more? shall the noble and brave
 Sleep near to the coward! nor rise from their beds?
 Shall the fire of the spirit be quench'd in the grave?
 And the proud one be lost in the dust that he treads?

Shall we ever meet more? shall the tyrant repose
 In peace, by the thousands he crushed in his might?
 Shall the eye of the sufferer never uncloset
 To blast the pale wretch who extinguish'd its light?

Shall we ever meet more? shall the bud of the wild,
Again be restor'd to its own lovely tree?

Shall the parent exult in the arms of his child?
The hero be blest, and the captive be free?

Shall we ever meet more? shall the pilgrim of woe
Find all the dear ties that asunder were riven?

Shall the charm that illumined his wand'rings below,
Still brighten his pathway of roses in Heaven?

Will she, who watched over my childhood be there,
Who soothed me in sorrow and blessed me in joy,

And know me? oh, say, will a mother's warm tear,
Fall o'er the changed form she had loved as her boy?

Those tears be my welcome, the tribute of love,
The sparkles of happiness, bliss can beguile;

And her smile, will it have the same sweetness above?
'Twould not be my mother, if robbed of that smile!

On her gentle bosom I'd softly recline,
Each kindling endearment of boyhood recall:

For others the splendours of Heaven might shine,
I'd cling to my mother, still "dearer than all!"

And wilt thou lovely flower of the Island be there?
 And leave our rude clime for a region of bliss,
 To welcome the spirits who found thee too fair,
 And bind up the hearts thou hast broken in this?

Oh, they who have joy'd in thy fragrance before,
 Will form a sweet circle of love round thy throne;
 The beauteous exotic shall bloom evermore,
 The queen of some Island as bright as her own.

Lady, the stranger *would* please, but 'tis vain,
 His feelings and off'rings too sadly agree,
 Forgive, that he breathes so imperfect a strain,
 While touching the chord that was hallow'd by thee.

His spirit was stormy, he laugh'd o'er the foam,
 His guiding star lost, but he left not the desk,
 For the compass of hope pointed still to his home,
 Where the life-boat should bear him away from the
 wreck.

What fired the bright beacon when pleasure was gone?
 What rous'd his cold fancy, enliven'd his frame?
 "He knew not, he ask'd not," like Iran's dear son,
 He saw but its lustre and worshipp'd the flame.

Turn not from the stranger the light of that smile,
 It warm'd his sad heart in the moment of pain;
 Not e'en for the wealth of thine own native isle,
 Would he quench the sweet incense it kindled up there

Lady, farewell! midst the shadows of night
 Should I image thy form when the solemn bell tolls;
 Oh! fancy shall hail thee, a spirit of light,
 A messenger, sent from the meeting of souls!



ANNIVERSARY ODE FOR THE 8th OF JANUARY.

When freedom's eagle winged her giant flight
 Across th' Atlantic sea,
 Her ancient eyrie in the night,
 Entomb'd of slavery;
 Earth saw the star of Europe's day
 That once on all had shone,
 The splendour of its former ray,
 On Britain shed alone,
 Where power arose
 O'er trampled foes
 With iron hand to bind
 The tyrant's reins,
 The bigot's chains,
 And they to chains resign'd.

High ramp'd the British lion then and proud
 O'er prostrate realms he sway'd,
 The nations at his anger bowed,
 And half the world obey'd:
 The glory then of Italy,
 The chivalry of France,
 Before the light'ning of his eye
 Shrunk wither'd at a glance;
 The tri-color
 Grew pale before
 The terror of his frown,
 His voice alone
 Destroy'd a throne,
 His will restor'd a crown.

Then rose fair land of liberty thy sun,
 And frighted virtue made her home
 With thee, where mighty torrents run,
 And on thy forest mountains roam
 The children of thy untam'd soil;
 They too untam'd, not unconfin'd
 By laws, but pure from arts that spoil
 The freedom of the mind.
 There virtue dwelt,
 And there were felt
 The blessings of her name;
 There beauty, health,
 And peace, and wealth,
 Walk'd hand in hand with fame.

Proud city, on thy blasted plains the heath
 Is wither'd, and thy stormy wave
 Broad Mississippi, speaks of death,
 As if each hollow cell a grave
 Contained, within thy breast:
 And wherefore is it so?
 Who underneath thy billows rest,
 Dark river? what hath laid ye low
 Fair blossoms? not
 The hand, I wot,
 Of nature in her frown;
 Her winter ne'er
 Is half so drear,
 She sends no blood-drops down.

A thousand voices answer from the deep;
 Lo, here the British lion stood!
 And where a thousand's ashes sleep,
 Here stream'd the gory flood!
 See! rousing at the sound again,
 War's crimson'd arm is bare,
 And havoc's slaughter cry, as then,
 Rides deaf'ning on the air.
 The purple tide
 Again is dyed
 A deep and deeper red;
 And English blood
 Hath stain'd the flood
 Where English hearts have bled.

Who leads the hostile squadron on, his brow
 Encircled by the laurel wreath,
 That snatch'd from France, he carries now
 A talisman 'gainst death?
 Behold! the light'ning of the war
 Hath sear'd it in its pride,
 Its with'ring fragments strewn afar,
 Lie scatter'd o'er the tide;
 And he whose arm
 Had won the charm
 Lies bleeding on the sand,
 While round his form
 The corpses warm
 Are reeking, of his band.

Weep, Albion, weep thy haughty Lion's fall,
 Our eagle soars on high;
 Who strike as ye struck, perish all!
 Our cause was liberty.
 And tho' no song of triumph rise
 For him who did the deed,
 No loud alarums rend the skies,
 No trophies pay his meed;
 The widow's fears,
 The orphan's tears,
 Now chang'd to smiles, shall pay
 To Jackson yet
 The mighty debt
 Of that triumphant day.

MARY.

There was a name, in childhood's hour,
 A little word, a spell of power,
 Could every wayward thought controul,
 And waken music in my soul:
 Its chains so gently hung around me,
 I fondly press'd each link that bound me,
 And thought from *such* captivity
 I never, never *would* be free.

That name, I felt its earliest charms
 Within a mother's cradling arms,
 When he, my source of life and joy,
 Bless'd his "dear Mary" and his boy!
 My heart received its treasured prize
 And spoke its gladness in my eyes,
 That beam'd as if with strength endow'd,
 The embryo soul had burst its shroud!

That name still dearer, dearer grew
 When a kind sister claim'd it too ;
 My thoughts, my feelings were refin'd
 Before the mirror of her mind,
 And when the blush of morn was o'er us
 How bright the path of life before us,
 The fruit so sweet, the flowers so gay,
 Where art thou, Mary? where are they?

That name-can ne'er its power forget,
 But gives to looks that love me yet
 (To waken bliss and care beguile)
 The semblance of my mother's smile.
 A sister's voice, as kind, as dear,
 A sister's sympathising tear,
 These are not lost—I fondly see,
 My Mary, all restored in thee.

That name, how richly valued now!
 When gazing on thy lovely brow,
 Thy form, where "purity enshrin'd"
 So sweetly guides a matchless mind,
 I've vainly, vainly sought for speech
 To breathe the worth I could not reach,
 And whispering "Mary," oh! I've found
 A world within that magic sound.

And can it e'er be nought to me,
 Or lose its hallow'd melody?
 Oh, no! like Ossian's darling theme,*
 Thy name shall light my darkest dream,
 And when my harp discordant rings,
 Thy spirit, breathing o'er the strings,
 Shall change the tone and bid it raise
 Sweet numbers to "my Mary's" praise.

* Malvina, the betrothed of his son Oscar, and the affectionate guide of the sightless bard. After her death, as the wind swept the chords of his harp, he often fancied the presence of his lost favorite.

Dear name! my lips in breathing you,
 As if the sound might leave them too,
 Cling closer, anxious to recall
 The much lov'd accents as they fall,
 It grows with life—with life to 'part
 The warm devotion of the heart.
 Each zealot has his chosen shrine,
 "Thou, Mary, art forever mine!"

BALLAD.*

'Tis lonely in Eliza's bower,
 The lamp untrim'd, the couch unprest—
 Where wanders she in such an hour,
 When innocence and youth should rest?

The beauteous guardian of the night
 Sheds a protecting influence round,
 And grateful nature hails the light,
 That spangles o'er the dewy ground.

Can danger lurk in such a scene?
 Can man, by brutal passions driven,
 Face the soft ray of midnight's queen,
 And murder 'midst the smiles of Heaven?

* Founded on Fact.

A voice is heard—not one alone—
 For other, sadder sounds are nigh;
 It is a mother's pleading tone,
 A dying infant's mother'd cry.

Oh! when beneath the silver ray,
 It pillow'd soft its little head;
 Could man disturb it where it lay,
 To place it in a colder bed?

The wave receded from the shore,
 Exulting in a prize so sweet,
 Yet e'en again repentant bore,
 The lovely victim to thy feet.

And thou could'st spurn it—coward wretch!
 When the cold wave had pity—thou
 Could'st see its hands for mercy stretch,
 And whelm in death its lovely brow!

May the eternal vengeance hoard,
 Its burning curses for thy sake,
 And shouldst thou thirst the wave abhorr'd,
 Over thy soul in mockery break!

Thy babe shall haunt the endless dream,
 Before thy startled vision swim,
 And offer, from the murderous stream,
 The draught so fully dealt to him.

* * * * *

But see the pale Eliza stand
 With sunken cheek and aspect wild!
 The outraged spirit of the land,
 Claims from her hands her murdered child.

She speaks not, pleads not, save to say,
 That she is guiltless of its death,
 And would have given her life to stay,
 Her darling baby's parting breath.

They ask of one, (but naught can prove,)
 Who wrong'd and fled—why did he fly?
 She answers not—to save her love
 Prefers a felon's death to die.

To that dread voice, so still before,
 The awful words of fate are given—
 “A few brief days of trial more,
 “The next before the bar of Heaven!”

But there is one who whisper's “Live!”
 Whose heart's best blood were freely spilt,
 Ere that too faithful heart could give,
 Its credence to a sister's guilt.

Your cruel judgment I'll deny,
 Before the rulers of the land!
 There is no crime in that soft eye,
 No murder on that lily hand!

• • • • •

Now onward, on, my gallant steed!
Thy flying mane must kiss the wind;
Let distance vanish in thy speed,
And leave those towering hills behind.

On! on! thou bearest thy foaming brow,
To no proud scene of bloody strife;
I seek the lists of mercy now,
The prize Eliza's forfeit life.

Plunge! plunge! altho' the tempest lowers,
We've swam as deep a wave before—
The cause of innocence is ours;
That cause shall bear us safely o'er.

The bank is gained—the distant halls
Of state, in fancy seem to rise,
When lo! his noble charger falls,
Struggles awhile, and pants and dies.

My gallant horse!—thou wert full dear,
Thy match not all my wealth had bought;
I must not stay to mourn thee here,
A sister claims my every thought.

On! on!—the stranger courser leaves
The shadows gathering on his flight;
The flashing steel triumphant cleaves
Like lightning 'midst the clouds of night.

Oh! haste thee, like my charger brave,
That gave for me his parting breath—
I go to one, empower'd to save,
My sister from a felon's death.

* * * * *

She lies so pale, in slumber thrown
Her snowy arms on either side,
That death had thought the form his own
And claim'd her for his lovely bride.

She dreams of youth's felicity,
Of burning vows believed too well,
She wakes—alas! the fatal tree
Claims its sad victim from her cell.

* * * * *

And hearts there are within that crowd
That feel the force of sorrow's weight,
And tongues there are that murmur loud
Against the lovely felon's fate.

She raises now her tearless eye,
And hope still seems to linger there:
"Oh! were he here to see me die,
And soothe me with a brother's care.

"He comes not—oh, how dark this place!
He yet may be in time to save
An honour'd name from foul disgrace,
A sister from a felon's grave!"

The death-bell tolls—she strives to speak—
The noose around her neck is past,
One name—a blush is on her cheek,
'Twas love's first offering and its last.

What steed comes wildly o'er the hill
Like lightning to the fatal tree?
Who madly spurs him fiercer still?
One universal shout—" 'tis he! !"

The frenzied cry of "a reprieve!"
Echo repeats with wild alarms,
He comes! he comes! 'tis to receive
Her lifeless body in his arms.

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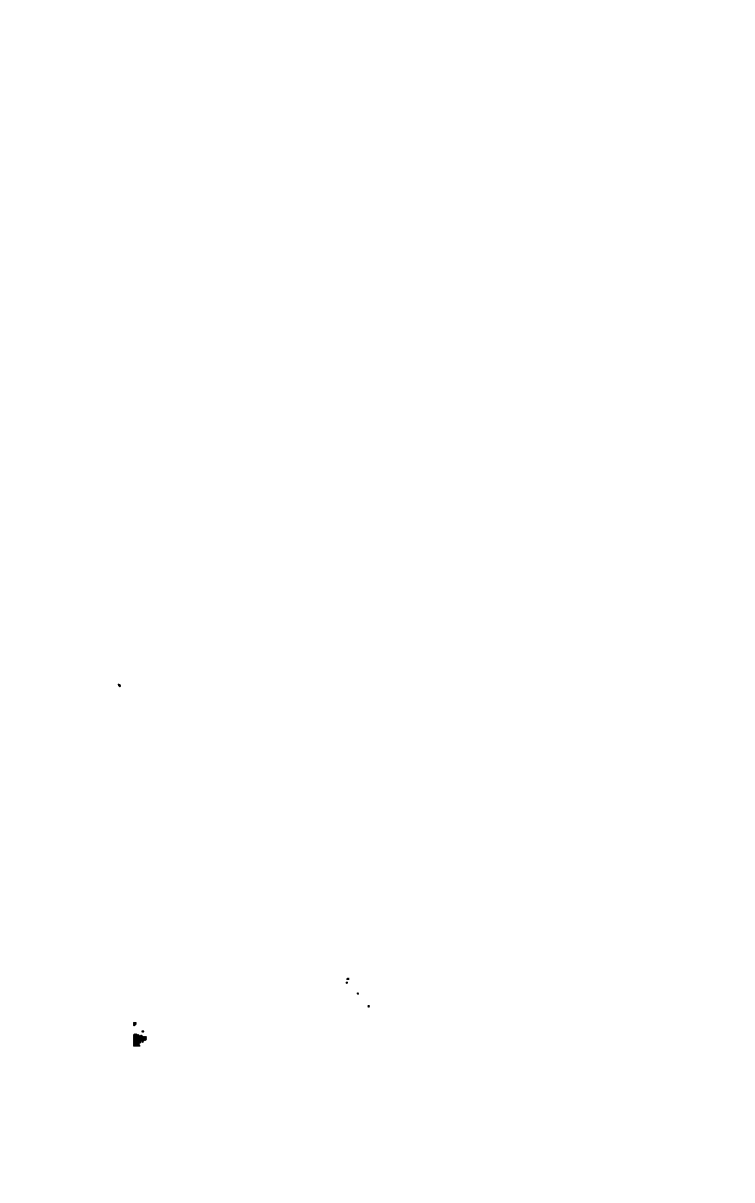
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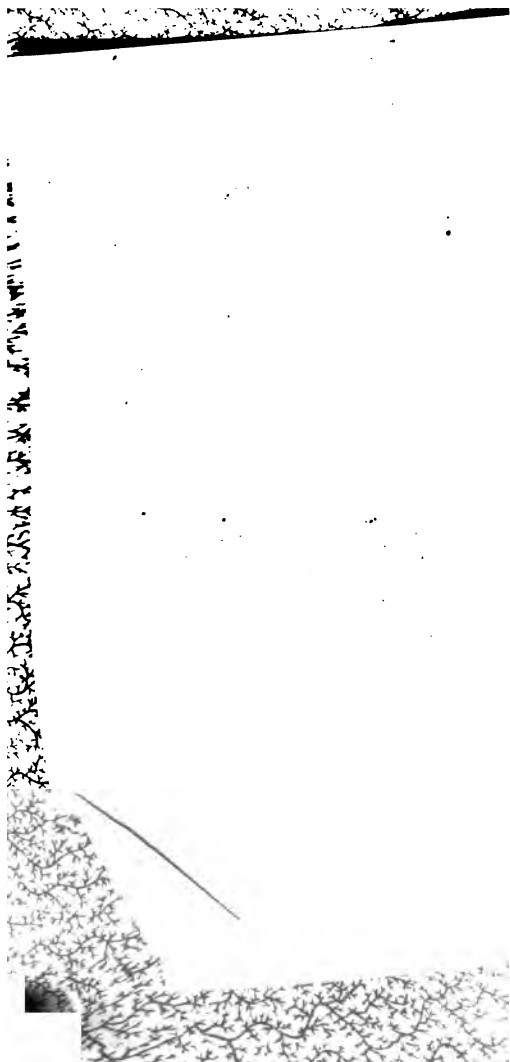


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